A BOX OF SPIKENARD *Newly Broken:*

OR

The Celebration of *Chriſtmas-Day*

proved to be pious and lawful, even in this Compendious Diſcourſe; which was at firſt occaſioned by fourteen Arguments of Mr. *Richard Baxter*, Teacher of *Kederminſter*: which are now fully anſwered by *Thomas Malpas*, Preacher of *Pedmore*.

The ſecond Edition inlarged.

With a Preface, written ſince the happy return of King *Charls* the Second.

By *T. Jordan*, Student in Phyſick

Ἐκ τῆ στόματός σε κρινῶ σε, &c. *Luke* 19. 22.

London, Printed for the Author, 1661.

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TO THE

Right Honourable, *Thomas Grey* of *Enfield*, Esq; Grace and Peace in this Life, and a Crown of Glory in that to come.

Right Worshipfull,

IT was not only the love which you bear to Antiquity, and your real friendship to those Authentick and Orthodox Divines, who plead for the pure Primitive and Apostolique Church, and its decent Customs, &c, but your loyalty to King CHARLS, *and your real desire of Monarchy (which none but* Ciniflones, *and the bellows of insurrection despise) that hath emboldned and animated us, so far to intrench and presume upon your Worship's gracious asspect and favour, as to dedicate and present these ensuing Lines to your learned and judicious View; which if they were worthy of you,*

they would challenge you as the right Owner. But we humbly confesse, that they deserve not the least of your countenance. 1. *In respect of our own unabilities.* 2. *In respect of those manifold Graces, and that depth of Learning wherewith the Lord hath filled you: by the vertue of which, you in a Tongue far more eloquent than this of ours, and in a masculine stile, could confute the erroneous Pamphlets of all Antagonists, Combatants, & Gain-sayers, whosoever.* We know, *that whosoever adventures upon the Stage, and becometh thus publike on the Stationer's Bulk; shall be sure to meet with many a carping Momus, and shall hear the bitter Calumnies and Obtrectations of malignant* Zoilus. *And we know as well that the Tongues of such are no slander:* Præstatque ab eis (*according to* Seneca) vituperari, quam laudari.

Sir, *your love to learning in general, and your special respect to the good old Way (for you delight not in Innovations, which (as King* CHARLES *hath wittily observed) are usshered in under the pretence of Reformation) hath been a singular spurr and motive to this bold attempt, as knowing your Worship richly accomplish'd (with that which the Poets of old were wont to term,* ψυχῆς ἰατρεῖα τὰ χρήματα)

ματα) *good learning.* Nihil habet natura tua melius quam ut velis, vel fortuna tua majus, quam ut poſſis, literarum & * muſarum alumnis patrocinari. Claruit hæc virtus patre in tuo, viro plane divino; tu ex eadem ſtirpe ramus, eundem (proculdubio) fructum polliceris: macte igitur virtute eſto, & in hac Regia via (Djis & bonis avibus faventibus) proficiſceris; donec Antiquos Heroas ſuperas, vel ad minimum æquas.

* ἐκ μοῦσᾶν ἀγαθὸν κλέος ἔρχεσθαι ἀνθρώποισι.

Sir, *We know you delight not in prolixity, therefore 'tis our part to uſe brevity; yet if we ſhould make no report of your Vertues, then thoſe that know you would judge us ungrateful, the worſt of men: and if we ſhould make a due report of your Vertues, then thoſe that know you not, would judge us flatterers, the worſt of friends: Therefore we only ſay this, (which all that know you affirm) that for general eminency in all endowments of Grace, the World can number but few ſuch. We humbly crave your patronage of this, for whatſoever it is, it is your Worſhip's, and ſo are the Authors; who wiſh you much felicity in this World, and a ſempiternal Crown of Glory in that to come.*

April 2. 1660.

TO THE

Faithfull Subjects of King CHARLES the Second.

READER,

THE Church of *England* (a Church formerly inferior to none (though now dilacerated by rebellious Novelists) but rather the most excellent in all the Christian World, both for piety, decency, and order of perfect Discipline) hath been long crucified betwixt two Theeves; I shall not at this present meddle with the former, but the latter comes so pat in my way, that I know not how well to avoid him.

The latter Thief is (for so I may well term him) *Dominus Johannes Presbyterianus*, the rigidly Scotized, factious, monstrous, and new-moulded Presbyter, who hath violated our true Church-Government, and dragged the reverend Bishops and their conformable Clergy (as the fattest Deers) to the Shambles; and yet

yet they (I mean the rigid Presbyterians) being lean, like the raskcally herd of Schism, &c. as yet enjoy the benefit of a Toleration.

Courteous Reader, This sort of through-paced Schismaticks, have not onely overturned the Primitive Church; but like a rebellious Crew have tyrannized over the whole Kingdom, and have destroyed Monarchy, which was instituted by God himself. *KNOX*, *BUCHANAN*, and the rest of the Pillars of the Puritan Anarchy affirm, that Kings or Princes are no more but the Proxies or Atturnies of the People; and their Successor, *Cromwellius Baxter*, who hath licked up the Excrement of the *Cromwel's*, affirms,—— [*That those who plead Inheritance must fetch the Original from consent]. For the confutation of such rebellious Doctrine, see my [Discourse against him, but here ponder upon these ensuing Tenets.

w *Mr.* Baxter's *malice to King* Charles, *who is his true and lawfull Soveraign.*

1. That Kings are more then the Proxies or Atturnies of the People.

2. That the consent of the People makes not a King.

3. That God sent a King.

4. That the King is God's anointed.

5. That a wicked King is God's anointed

nointed, *Saul* a King as well as *David.*

6. We ought not to touch God's annointed, or to murder a wicked King: And let the rigid Presbyterians confute these Tenets if they are able; if they cannot, let them beg pardon for what they have done.

Reader, Follow not senseless Novelties, but primitive Verities; it is more safe to be a member of the uniform Church, then to pin ones Faith upon the sleeve of ten thousand illiterate Upstarts: better to adhere to the Judgments and Counsels of the antient Fathers, then to follow new Models and Opinions which have been lately buoyed up by the perfidious *Scots*; Trample rebellion under thy feet, and cry aloud with me, *God save the* KING.

T. Jordan.

Stowerbridge,
April 2.
1660.

On

On Christmas Day.

Behold a silly tender Babe,
In freezing Winter night,
In homely Manger trembling lyes;
Alas! a piteous sight;
The Inns are full, no man will yield
This little Pilgrim, Bed;
But forc't he is with silly Beasts,
In crib to shrowd his head.
Despise him not for lying there,
First what he is enquire:
An orient pearl is often found
In depth of dirty mire.
Weigh not his crib, his woodden dish,
Nor beasts that by him feed:
Weigh not his Mother's poor attire,
Nor Joseph's *simple weed.*
This Stable is a Prince's Court,
The Crib his Chair of State:
The Beasts are parcel of his pomp,
The woodden Dish his Plate.
The persons in that poor attire,
His royal Liveries wear;

The

The Prince himself is come from Heaven,
This pomp is prized there.
With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King;
And highly praise his humble pomp,
Which he from Heaven doth bring.

Halelu-jah.

On the same.

As I in hoary Winter's night
Stood shivering in the Snow,
Surpriz'd I was with sudden heat,
Which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful Eye
To view what Fire was near:
A pretty Babe all burning bright
Did in the Ayr appear;
Who, scorched with excessive heat,
Such floods of tears did shed,
As though his floods should quench his flames,
Which with his tears were bred. (flames,
Alas! (quoth he) but newly born,
In fervy heats I fry;

Yet

Yet none approach to warm their heart's
Or feel my fire but I:
My faultleſs breaſt the furnace is,
The fuel wounding thornes:
Love is the fire, and ſighs the ſmoak,
The aſhes ſhames and ſcorns;
The fuel juſtice layeth on,
And mercy blows the coles,
The metal in this furnace wrought,
Are mens defiled Souls;
For which, as now on fire I am,
To work them to their good:
So will I melt into a Bath,
To waſh them in my Blood.
With this he vaniſht out of ſight,
And ſwiftly ſhrunk away;
And ſtraight I called unto mind,
That it was Chriſtmas Day.

Halelu-jah.

Ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην λέγει, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ.

On

On the Presbyterians.

PResbytery, like a young Heir, thinks the * Father hath lived long enough; and, impatient not to be in the Bishop's Chair & Authority, (though Lay-men go away with the Revenues); all art is used to sink Episcopacy, and launch Presbytery in *England*; which was lately † buoyed up in *Scotland* by the like Artifice of a Covenant: King *CHARLS* in his Εἰκὼν Βασιλικὴ, Meditat. 14. upon the Covenant.

* *By father, the* King *means Bishops.*

† *The Presbyterians are but of a new boyish factious Model.*

I must now in charity be thought desirous to preserve that Government in its right constitution, as a matter of Religion; wherein both my Judgment is fully satisfied, and it hath of all other the fullest Scripture-grounds, and also the constant practice of all Christian Churches, till of late years the tumultuarineſs of People, or the pride and factiousneſs of Presbyters, &c. gave occasion to some mens wits to invent new Models, and propose them under specious titles of Christ'

Proud and factious Presbyters.

Christ's Government, Scepter and Kingdom, the better to serve their turns, to whom the Change was beneficial. King *CHARLS* in his Εἰκὼν Βασιλικὴ, Medit. 17. of the differences betwixt the King and the two Houses in point of Church Government.

Reader, The whole stream of Church-Histories runs so far for Episcopacy, that the least rivulet is not left for Presbytery; and yet they, I mean Presbyters (who, if they are not * Traytors; yet they are inordinate and fierce:) (if they could help it) would allow no Government but theirs: but King *Charls* the first, was resolved never to have Episcopacy extirpated: and (if I mistake not) hath prayed that none of his should yield to such doings; therefore I doubt not but we shall see the Church flourish under primitive Episcopacy; and Schism, (like unsavory salt) to be trodden under feet.

* *King* Charl's *meditation.* 17.

APPROBATIO.

APPROBATIO.

Librum hunc cui titulus (A Box of Spikenard) *diligenter legi, in quo nihil Orthodoxæ & Christiánæ fidei dissonum deprehendi; immo methodo facili, compendiosa, & ad docendum accomodata, veritas stabilitur, Schisma (ni fallor) & hæreses solide ac eruditè refelluntur: ideo dignum judico, qui in communem utilitatem imprimatur.*

J. W. D. D.

April 10.
1660.

THE AVTHOR TO THE Indifferent and Impartial *Reader.*

I Shall use no further Preface or Introduction to this insuing Treatise, but onely to acquaint thee, that this Task was at first undertaken by me, not onely for the satisfaction of some private intimate Friends and honest-minded Protestants, who did much sollicite and intreat me hereunto; but also for the confutation of all such peevish and perverse opposers of the Truth. And to stop the mouthes (if it were possible) of such Malignant Antilegons, Antagonists and

Gain-ſayers; who do much grieve and offend their weak Brethren, by putting a ſtumbling block, or an occaſion to fall in their way; even touching things indifferent and matters of little or no conſequence at all. Rom. 14. *Such men as theſe you know are cenſured and perſtringed by St.* Paul. *And I know, alſo that by the Law of* Moſes *they are condemned,* Levit. 19. 14. *Thou ſhalt not curſe the deaf, nor put a ſtũbling-block before the blind, but ſhalt fear thy God; I am the Lord. As for ſuch quaint and curious, difficult and preciſe Readers as theſe, I eare not how few theſe poor labours of mine do meet with: I know they will be apt, like* Zoilus, *to look upon them,* fronte corrugante, *with a wrinkled or bended brow; and, with* Momus, *not onely to bite the lipp at them, but,* cum dente Theonino, *gnaſh with their malicious teeth, and be ready to rent and tear them in pieces; I know that they will be apt to ſay, that I am become a fool in print, and am very forward to blaze my own folly and foppery; yea, and to maintain my old Popery and Superſtition; yea, perhaps, they will call me and accuſe me, as* Tertullus *did* Act. 24. 5. Paul, *to be a peſtilent fellow, and a mover of ſedition, and an enemy to the State,*

with

with the like obloquies and exprobrations: But when I meet with such as these I presently put on Paul's *resolution, and say,* 1 *Cor.* 3. 4. with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of them, or of man's Judgment; *yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing of my self:* (i. e.) *whereof to boast, saving of mine infirmities,* (*as he speaks elsewhere*): *yet put the case I should know any thing in my self that is commendable or praise-worthy, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord:* Quod olim altè & acutè quispium, id hîc verâ voce proclamo: Satis mihi pauci lectores, satis est unus, satis est nullus: id tamen peto, ut quicunque hæc tangens cognoscendi animum adferat, & simul ignoscendi; namque vetus & verum proverbium est, Ut facilius est carpere quàm corrigere, sic facilius est interrogare quam respondere. *We have in these last and worst times, in these perilous and pernicious, dangerous and Climacterical days of ours a new brood of those old Serpents, a fresh generation of Vipers lately hatched and sprung forth amongst us, as it were a spawn of those proud and insolent and supercilious Scribes and Pharisees that*

were

were amongſt the Jews, who viliſie Chriſt, and do both ſcornfully and diſdainfully think and ſpeak of Him, as they did, Mark 6. 3. Is not this the Carpenter, the Son of *Mary*, the Brother of *James*, and *Joſes*, and *Juda*, and *Simon? and are not his Siſters here with us? And they were offended at him. And how truly did that old good man* Simeon *Propheſie of Him; ſaying*, Behold, this Child is ſet for the Fall and Riſing again of many in *Iſrael*, and for a Signe that ſhall be ſpoken againſt: *Neither is it without a Myſtery which the Angel told the Shepheards, This ſhall be a ſigne unto you; you ſhall find the Infant wrapt in ſwadling-Clothes: Upon which word, devout* Bernard *deſcants ſweetly thus*, In ſignum poſiti ſunt panni tui (ô bone Jeſû); ſed, in ſignum *κατὰ λεγόμενον, a ſigne that is ſpoken againſt, a ſigne that is done againſt; for we cannot abide thy Clouts, nor thy Raggs (O Lord Jeſu), nor any part of thy Humility: which makes the Proud and Arrogant, and inſolent ſpirits of a late up ſtart Phantaſtical and Pharaiſaicall Generation; ſo peremptorily and perverſly to ſpeak, and audaciouſly*

to

to write, against the solemn Remembrance of thy Nativity.

Courteous Reader, *to shew their frenzy and madness I have written, and adventured to divulge these Papers, and if thou dost receive any comfort or profit by these poor labours of mine, give God the Glory, and wish well to him, Who wisheth nothing but well to thee in Christ Jesus.*

T. M.

AN Appendix to the Preface.

THere are two things principally required in a Minister, the one that he be able to exhort with wholesome Doctrine: the other that he hath skill to Improve them that say against it, *Tit.* 2. 9. whereunto agreeth that witty saying of grave St. *Austin*, that he must be *veritatis propugnator*, *& erroris expugnator*, (i.e.) he must be a maintainer of the Truth, and a withstander of Errour, *August. de doctrinâ Christi. Lib.* 4. *c.* 4.

Author

Author ad Libellum.

Vade ſed incultus,——

Candidus Auctoris Amicus, ad Lectorem candidum et benevolum.

READ on good Reader *but read aright;*
Do not miſtake, nor conſtrue things in ſpight.
'Tis a proud word to ſpeak, yet true I ween,
That ſuch a Book as this you have ſeldom ſeen.
All Books this Chriſtmas, *whereon vain men do look,*
Are not to be compared to this little Book.
You cannot play at a more delightſome Game,
Than to handle, and peruſe, and read the ſame.
'Tis not Pandora's *Box, here is no ill;*
Be not afraid, but open't with goodwill.

'Tis

T is rather Mary's *Box, ſhe brake in love*
Of her dear Saviour, as't did truly prove;
An Ointment 'twas, ſo pretious and ſo ſweet,
It did perfume the Houſe where they did meet:
Spikenard *the ſame was call'd, and ſo it was,*
For it did other Odours far ſurpaſs.
So if this Spikenard *ſhall afford a pleaſing ſmell,*
Such Readers *(I wis) ſhall pleaſe us paſſing well.*
It is not for his Burial but his Birth,
'Cauſe He was born for to redeem the Earth;
Otherwiſe we had all been caſt to Hell,
With the Devil and his Angels there to dwell.
O happy time! that ever He was born,
To ſave poor Sinners that were thus forlorn.
To celebrate the five and twentieth of December,
O let us all, with one accord, remember,
And not forget His kindneſs towards Man,
But ſet forth's praiſe with all the Might we can.

Did

Did not the Angels do the ſame, and ſing
A holy Carroll to our Heavenly King?
Did not the Shepherds & Wiſe men of the
East
Praiſe Him, & bring preſents of the beſt;
Even Gold, & Frankincenſe, & Myrrhe?
To come ſo far they did themſelves beſtir;
In ſo ſhort a time (I mean) to come ſo far:
But they were guided by a glorious Star
To Bethlem *Town, and to that very place*
Wherein that bleſſed Babe lay full of grace,
Though mean in ſhew, and laid but in a
Manger,
Yet they acknowledg'd him, though they
were ſtrangers;
And down they fell upon their bended knee,
And did adore and worſhip him, all three;
Opening their Treaſures, & offering ſuch
a thing
As did become a Man, a God, a King:
A Myſtery! for Myrrhe, & Frankincenſe,
& Gold
Do ſignify the Office of Chriſt *threefold:*
For both King, Prieſt, & Prophet's He
To rule, & pray for, & teach both thee &
me.

And

And this, according to the Christian Poet Juvencus,

(Hominiq;
Aurum, Thus, Myrrham, Regiq; Deoq;
Dona ferunt.

Liber

Liber ad Lectorem.

Si Natura negat, facit Indignatio Verſum.

AND is it News you look for? O
Sir, *There's none;*
I do but tell you of a thing done long agone:
Yet this is News, for me thinks 'tis very
ſtrange
To hear of ſuch an uncouth, & prodigious
Change,
That Chriſtmas *ſhould be buried! Is old*
England *dead?*
Alas! This whimzy comes from a ſtrange
head,
Who would have all things new, in ſpight
of old.
Sure they would have a new Chriſt *if they*
could;

A

A Christ *without a Birth: How ſtrange*
is this?
Sure they are madd, or elſe they dote, I
wis:
New Lords, new Laws: What, would
they have new Gods?
Or do they long to be ſcourg'd with new
Rods.
War was in the Gates, and many a miſery
moe,
When Iſrael *did the living God foregoe,*
To worſhip dead Idols of wood and ſtone,
Whereas they ſhould have worſhipt God a-
lone.
But mark their reaſon, which is not worth
a ruſh,
They all want ſhame, or elſe they would
bluſh;
Becauſe they know not when Chriſt *was*
born,
Therefore, like Jews, *at's Birth they ſcorn*
And ſcoff at us, becauſe that we do dance
Before the Ark, & do Chriſt's *Name ad-*
vance:
But let them Michol-*like diſdain, yet we*
With holy David, *will yet viler be.*
The Article of his Birth-day they do deny
Such Antichriſtian *Tenets I defy:*

F

For born he was, and of a Virgin pure,
And did for us the pains of Hell endure,
To bring us unto happineſs, and perfect bliſs,
Wherein no ſenſe of grief nor ſorrow is.
Then cauſe have we for to obſerve this time,
And not to account it any fault or crime:
This Feaſt of Chriſt *hath been highly kept of yore,*
And never yet eſteemed Popery before.
It is not Superſtition to eat a Pye;
Sure, he that tells you this, tells you a Lye,
And doth diſſemble with his glozing tongue.
Theſe Round head Hypocrites do all the wrong:
All ancient cuſtomes be they ne're ſo good,
They eſteem no more than Tales of Rob-bin-hood.
'Cauſe Papiſts keep it, therefore muſt not we?
'Cauſe they are good to the poor wee'l hide-bounded be.
Oh no! Not ſo, my Maſters, whatſoever betide,
Let us follow the Scripture for our onely Guide,

Which

Which tells us, 'Tis better to give than to
receive;
And he that saith not so, doth us deceive.
Reader *farewell, I do defy*
All those which Christ's *Birth-day deny.*

To

To his
Loving Friend
Mr. *T. M.*

QT being my hap, not long ſince, to find this Treatiſe of Yours, even before the printing and publiſhing thereof, in a Friend's Houſe; And being, upon Inquiry, informed touching the Quality of the Authour, I wondred what man it was, that had ſo much Chriſtian Courage in him, as to adventure to vindicate this Chriſtian Duty of celebrating the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour *Chriſt Jeſus*; contemning the clamorous Cenſures, and the vain Ob-

jections, and *Argumenta mutilata* of the weak multitude of Pretenders to Religion and Learning. Therefore being much affected with your Christian valour, in this kind, and desirous to commend the same to posterity; It is not in my power to do it more effectually, than by adding this Epistle to your Treatise, which (if I were eloquent) I should commend in the Superlative degree. For, although the valiant and learned Champions, or rather railing Antagonists, of our times, *evomunt quicquid in buccam venit*, and spit out their venome against it, and strive, *tanquam pro aris & focis*, to maintain that it is a meer vanity to observe the blessed time of Christ's Birth-day: Yet, if they will give me leave to speak, I shall tell them, That the most learned Arguments that their subtle brains can invent or produce, are not sufficient to prove it a Sin, to celebrate this time; and besides, I will tell them, it is an *Herculean* labour, and as hard a task as to fetch *Cerberus* out of Hell. And although they give out the worst words they can rake out of the sink of their rotten brains, against it; yet I will tell them, It is easier for them to drive

drive a Spunge into a Milstone, than to disswade many godly People from the due Observation of it.

Reader, Whoever thou art, be perswaded in thy self, That the honouring of this time is just, honest, commendable, good, and lawful. And I prove it thus, with a threefold Argument (and you know that a Cord which is threefold, or thrice doubled, is not easily broken): My Argument is this,

That which God, and the Church of God, and the ancient Fathers have commanded to be kept and celebrated, ought to be kept and celebrated; and the use of it, is good, pious, lawful, and commendable:

But God, and the Church of God, and the Fathers, have commanded this day to be kept and celebrated. *Ergo*, &c.

I prove that God hath commanded it out of *Heb.* 1. 6. Ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ. And again, when he bringeth the first-begotten into the World, he saith, *And let all the Angels of God worship Him*, Psal. 77. 7. הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ כָּל־אֱלֹהִים *Incurvate vos ei*

omnes Divi. Luke *Chap.* 2. *ver.* 10, 11.

Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ ἄγγελος, Μὴ φοβεῖσθε, ἰδοὺ γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην, ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ.

Ὅτι ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν σήμερον σωτὴρ, ὅς ἐστι Χριστὸς Κύριος ἐν πόλει Δαβίδ. *And the Angel said unto them, Fear not,* &c.

That the Church of God, and the Fathers, commanded it to be celebrated, is exactly proved in the Answers of some of the 14 *Arguments*, and I need not recite them here: And I do believe that there is no man in this Nation who hath lived forty or fifty years, but hath known *Christmas*-day strictly observed and kept.

But alas! We can expect no goodness, if we cast but our eyes upon the age wherein we live. It is most admirably deciphered by the Poet,

——*De duro est Ultima ferro;*
Protinus irrupit venæ pejoris in ævum
Omne nefas: Fugêre Pudor, Verumq́; Fideſq́;,
In quorum ſubiêre locum frandeſq́;, doliq́;,
Inſidiæq́;, & vis, & amor ſceleratus habendi.

At last the Iron-Age comes blustring in,
I'th' latter times, and fills the World with Sin;
All Shame, and Truth, and Faithfulnesse are gone:
Fraud and Deceipt, Lords paramount, alone,
Do rule: By snares and violence men get
Estates, and all is Fish that comes to Net.

Which how truly it is verified, every body may see, if not as blind as Moles; and may feel, if not senslesse. I shall now speak a word or two to some which raile at, and preach down, the Solemnity of this Time: & desire them to spend the time which they spend in burying Antiquity and lawful Customs, in the Transluting of many things which are not as yet translated, and not to monopolize Knowledge. I will name some places which are not as yet translated, *viz. Psal.* 56. To the Chief Musitian upon עַל־יוֹנַת אֵלֶם רְחוֹקִים Why could not they have translated it *Super Columbam mutam remotis*, The dumb Dove in a far Country. And I

am perſwaded, that they durſt not tranſlate one Word, when they looked on their own Coats, *Zeph.* 1.4. *I will cut off the names of the* CHEMARIMS *with the Prieſts*; meeting with the Word, now and then, in *Hoſea*, they tranſlated it *Prieſts*; but here it being joyned with the word *PRIEST*, my Blades plaid the honeſt (I ſhould have ſaid, the ſelfiſh) men, and never tranſlated it at all: *Tremelius* and *Junius* give it a very honeſt and true Verſion, *Nomen Atratorum cum Sacerdotibus*, The Names of Black-Coats with the Prieſts. I commend this Scripture to the ſerious conſiderations of our Rigid *Presbyterians*: and when they look upon it, let them do as the Peacock doth, when he looks on his leggs.

I deſire the Reader of this Book, not to give credit to every one that ſpeaks againſt Antiquity, nor to carp at that which they cannot mend: for I dare ſay, and will affirm, that the Authour hereof hath written herein, nothing but what is true, nothing contrary to the Will of God; to whoſe Protection I leave him.

The Almighty bleſs him, & proſper his ſtudies: For ſuch is the deſire and hopes

of

of him, who craves leave to subscribe himself,

Your Humble Servant and true admirer of your Christian Ingenuity, Sincerity, and Courage.

T. F.

Cour-

Courteous Reader.

MAny of our late Divines bring ſuch poor weak Arguments againſt the Celebration of Chriſt's birth-day, that I am almoſt aſhamed to repeat any of them; much leſs then, will I trouble my ſelf to anſwer them, they being ſo ridiculous, that (if it were poſſible) they would cauſe *corpus rationis vacuum*, to laugh them to ſcorne. Two or three I will repeat: the firſt is of a Divine that brought a *Rubrick* or *Almanack* into the Pulpit to bury this Day, and reads Arguments out of it to the People, and tells them a tale of a tub without a bottome; I am ſure this Gentleman might have looked in a *Jack-Dawes* Neſt, and have found as good Arguments there, as any he found in his *Almanack*.

Another Divine ſaith, It is not onely a bad time, but it is the worſt of all times; and thinks, This *ignis fatu-*

us,

us, of his giddy brain, is ſufficient to lead men from the Truth; But Alas! I will be ſo bold as to deny his Propoſition, and I am ſure, he cannot prove it, for he hath no more skill in arguing, then a Cow hath in dancing.

The third Divine ſaith, It is the Devil's day, and therefore ought to be buryed, and never to be celebrated. But I reply thus: His Body will deſcend into *Orcus*, and his Name will be buryed in Oblivion, long before this Day will be buryed: for I doubt not, but it will be celebrated as it ought to be, untill there will be a period put unto all things. I wiſh all Chriſtian Readers of this Book, happineſs in this World, and a Crown of Glory in that to come.

T. ſ.

A BOX OF Spikenard *Newly Broken.*

The Queſtion propounded by *Richard B.* which was the occaſion of this Treatiſe.

Queſt. WHether the *Nativity of Chriſt, commonly called Chriſtmas-day, ought to be celebrated*; R. B. *denyeth it, and endeavours to prove the contrary. His Arguments are theſe* 14 *following.*

Arg. 1.

Arg. 1. *There is nothing in the World a Duty, which God hath not made a Duty; But God never made this a Duty:* Ergo, *it is no Duty.*

Arg. 2. *If I should observe this Day, I am afraid lest I should deny the perfection of the Scriptures?*

Arg. 3. *I am fearful lest by doing so, I should arrogate the making of a Day to my self: for if I should do so much as in me lyeth, I should make a Day to my self.*

Arg. 4. *I am fearful lest by so doing, I should set up a Day against God.*

Arg. 5. *It is the Devil's policy to imitate God, and when he will be holy, he will be holyer then God; and when he seeth God will have a Sabbath to be kept, then he will set up a Day, and he will have a Christmas Day to be kept, and he will have his Pictures in the Church-windows, and the Crosse made on the Childrens foreheads in Baptism?*

Arg. 6.

Arg. 6. *I am fearful, leſt I ſhould be condemned for accuſing God for want of Wiſdom, and ſo make my ſelf wiſer then God, as though he knew not what ſhould be done as well as I, and ſo derogate from the Wiſdome of God.*

Arg. 7. *I am fearful of being more inexcuſable for my ſin.*

Arg. 8. *It ſeemeth to me a vain and needleſſe thing, Firſt, becauſe God hath ſet apart a Sabbath, the Lords Day, for this purpoſe to meditate upon God's love in redeeming the World; Secondly, Becauſe I never heard a good Argument for it.*

Arg. 9. *It is an impoſſibility to keep it, and God never made an impoſſibility, a duty: no man knoweth certainly on which day Chriſt was born.*

Arg. 10. *I obſerve God hides things purpoſely from us, to ſee whether we will do any thing on our own heads.*

Arg. 11. *It hath not bin the practiſe of Chriſtian Churches to obſerve it?*

Arg. 12.

Arg. 12. *In all doubtfull Caſes a man ought to go on the ſureſt ſide: Now I am ſure, It is no ſin not to keep it, but am not ſure, It is no ſin to keep it.*

Arg. 13. *This time ought not to be celebrated; for there is more ſin committed in theſe 12 Dayes, then is in all the year after, in Drunkenneſſe, Gluttony,* &c.

Arg. 14. *God bleſſeth his own Day, the Sabbath, but hath not bleſſed this, with ſucceſſe?*

Here followeth the Anſwer of *Thomas M.* to the forerecited Queſtions and Arguments: and herein, the honour of Chriſt his Nativity is Vindicated, or the Solemnity of his Birth-day (which is commonly called *Chriſtmas-day*), avowed and averred, (*i.e.*) juſtified and maintained to be lawful and good: Even in this Anſwer to fourteen arrogant Argumenrs, or weak Linſey-Woolly Reaſons, which have been of late eventilated, and divulged in writing to the contrary.

Anſwer

Answer to the first Argument.

You may remember that the first Argument runneth thus; *There is nothing in the World a duty which God hath not made a duty.*

But God never made the Celebration of the Nativity of Christ a Duty, *Ergo*, it is no Duty.

Though this Argument is Scholastically and Syllogistically propounded, yet I shall be so bold as to deny the Minor or second proposition, and that for these Reasons: for although it be not in words plainly expressed, yet in sense it is significantly and sufficiently implyed, and, by way of necessary consequence, may be deduced and gathered out of the first Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, at the *6. Verse.* When he bringeth forth his first begotten Son into the World; He saith, *And let all the Angels of Gods worship him*; and for proof hereof, to shew the sweet harmony and consent of both Testaments, the Old and the New, and that one and the same Spirit speaks in both: For the same

ſame God is Author of both, and the ſame Chriſt is Subject of both; inſomuch that each Teſtament is in other: for in the Law there is an hidden Goſpel, and in the Goſpel a revealed Law; *Being like the two Cherubins on the Mercy-Seat, whoſe faces looked one towards the other*, Exod. 25. 20. St. *Paul* alleadgeth that in *Pſal.* 97. 7. And howſoever the ordinary reacing of the Pſalm is, *worſhip Him all ye gods*; yet the Apoſtle Interprets it of Angels directly, ſaying according as *Tremelius* renders it out of the Original, *Incurvanto ſe, honorem exhibentes ei, omnes Angeli*; Let all the Angels of God worſhip Him: For ſo we find it to be true indeed, and ſo it was at Chriſt's Birth, and upon the very Day of his Nativity; That one Angel firſt reports it to the Shepheards of *Bethlehem*; and many other of thoſe Celeſtial Choriſters ſing Praiſes to God for it; Fear not, ſaid *Gabriel, for Behold, I bring you good tydings of great joy, which ſhall be unto all Nations; For unto you is born this Day in the City of* David, *a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord; and ſuddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt praiſing*

prayſing God, and ſaying, *Gloria Deo in Excelſis*, &c. Luke 2.13.14. Now I inferr from hence, that theſe Angels came not about this Errand without ſome ſpecial Commiſſion and Command from God, and therefore it was a Duty Commanded and Given in charge to them; Now, if the Angels, for whom Chriſt came not, were to performe it; How much more ought we Men to obſerve it, for whoſe ſake, and for whoſe Salvation he was Incarnate, and became Man; for verily, He took not on Him, *Naturam Angelorum, ſed Semen Abrahami*, not the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of *Abraham*, ſaith the Apoſtle. Wherefore the Angels, As they are called by a Divine Poet, The ſacred Tutors of the Saints, and the guard of God's Elect, &c: So they may alſo be called Tutors and Inſtructors to us, to inſtruct and teach us this Leſſon, and may be alſo exemplary Patterns and Precedents to us, in the practiſe and performance of this Duty. Anſwerable and agreeable hereunto, is the plat-form of our grand Maſter, and bleſſed Lord and Saviour Chriſt Jeſus; who hath taught us in the third Petition

Heb. 2.16.

Dubartas.

of that his moſt abſolute and perfect Prayer, to pray thus, *Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*: wherein we are taught to pray, (as all the beſt Orthodoxal Divines do expound it), that the will of God may be obeyed, and done by us as Chearfully, Speedily, Faithfully, Conſtantly and Continually; as it is done by the Angels in Heaven. And therefore as the Angels melodiouſly chanted it here on Earth at the Birth of Chriſt: So let us likewiſe unanimouſly celebrate, & ſet forth his praiſe, and ſay, *Glory be to God on High, in Earth Peace, good will towards Men. We bleſſe Thee, we praiſe Thee, we glorifie Thee, we give thanks to Thee for thy great Glory.* Theſe words were at firſt added to the Heavenly Carroll of the Holy Angels, by that famous Biſhop *Hilary*, and uſed by him in his own Church, *Anno* 340. So ſaith *Caſſander's Litturgy*, *Cap.* 22. And that this is a Duty expected and required from us, upon good ground, and ſpecial Reaſons and Cauſes that ſhould move us hereunto, grave St. *Auſtin* tells us wittily, and profoundly, This Quæry hath a ſufficient Quæry, *Quia verbum caro factum eſt*, &

& habitavit intra nos, Becauſe the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt amongſt us, *& vidimus Gloriam*, and we ſaw his Glory (ſaith St. *John*) *as of the onely begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*, John 1. 14. Wherefore as thoſe *Perſian* Sages (who were both Wiſemen and Kings) being led by the guidance, and aſſiſtance, and direction of a Starr to the place of Chriſt's Birth, and there did adore and worſhip Him, and preſented gifts unto Him, Gold, Frankincenſe, and Myrrh, *Math.* 2. 10. and this their coming made to the greater condemnation of the Jews, and to ſhame their blockiſhneſs and blindneſs, their ſluggiſhneſs carnality and infidelity, who ſtanding hard-by, ſaw not ſo much as they who came from far, according to that ſpeech of *Leo*, *Veritas illuminat magos*, *Infidelitas obcœcat magiſtros*: So it is to be feared, leſt the Lord for our contempt of Chriſt, and the unſpeakable benefits that we have received by his firſt coming in the fleſh, leſt the Lord (I ſay) for our ingratitude, and for our careleſſeneſſe and carnality, take his Word from us Chriſtians, as he did his Kingdom from

the Jews, and give it to such as we think to be most alien from God and his Gospel, even to *Moors*, and *Tartars*, *Turks*, and *Infidells*, who perhaps may bring forth better fruits of Obedience and Thankfulness than we have done, and so rise up in Judgment at the latter day, and condemn us; for if wisemen, brought up in Gentilism and Idolatry, come to *Christ* and believe, what excuse then belongs to the Jews? So if Infidels and Pagans believe and obey, What shall become of us, Christians, who want both Faith and Obedience? Thus much for the answering of the first Argument.

Answer to the second Argument.

The Words of the second Argument are these, *If I should observe this day, I am fearfull lest I should deny the Perfection of the Scripture; for in the Scripture all things are contained which are necessary to Salvation, and all things which are needfull to be believed, and done by a Christian man, for the attainment of Salvation.* But the Celebration of *Christ's* Nativity is not contained therein; *Ergo,*

go, If I ſhould obſerve this, I ſhould deny the Perfection of the Scriptures.

To this I anſwer, That the Article of our Faith, touching *Chriſt*'s Incarnation and Manifeſtation in the Fleſh, is both commended, and commanded, in the Scripture; and I refer you or any other indifferent Man, not onely to our Apoſtolicall Creed, which, although it be not Protocanonical Scripture, yet (as *Ambroſe* ſpeaks) it is the Key of the Scripture, and (as *Auguſtine* terms it) a plain, ſhort, abſolute, ſumm of all holy Faith: It is indeed a ſweet and brief *Compendium* and Abridgment of the whole Goſpel: But alſo I referr you to the learned and authentick Creed of judicious *Athanaſius*, (which is an accurate and compleat Expoſition of the former;) who ſaith, *Quicunq; vult ſalvari* &c. Whoſoever will be ſaved, it is neceſſary to his everlaſting Salvation, That he believe rightly in the Incarnation of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*: For the right Faith is, That we believe and confeſs, that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of God, is God and Man: And when did He become Man? or when was

God manifested in the Flesh, but on this day? And what fitter day can there be, to confess this Faith, than on the very same day he was born? For this is to perform, *Opus diei in die suo.* And this hath been both done and authorized, or allowed of, also to be done, by as ancient, learned, godly, and zealous Doctors and Divines, as ever the whole Christian World afforded, since the first appearance of *Christ* in the shape of Man; even by those *Chariots & Horsemen of* Israel, who were the chief Orient and resplendent Lights of the times, the Glory of the Churches, and the only Diamonds, Pearls, and Ornaments, of the places where they lived, men famous and renowned in their Generations; namely, St. *Cyprian*, St. *Ambrose*, St. *Augustine*, St. *Bernard*, St. *Chrysostome*, *Basil*, *Cyril*, *Beda*, *Theophylact*, *Euthymius*, *Ludolphus*, *Erasmus*, *cum multis aliis*, &c. whose Sermons, Homilies, and Orations, for this day's Solemnity, are both extant and eminent: and might be made also evident and apparant (if need were), sufficient to convince and stop the mouth of any peevish and perverse Antagonist or

or Gainſayer whatſoever. To theſe we may add (*Dia Poemata*) the Divine Poems of thoſe ſweet, melliſluous, Chriſtian Poets, *Palladius* and *Prudentius*, made in an honourable memoriall of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour's Nativity: And what if we mentioned here the rare Prophecies and Prædictions of the *Sybillaes* of old, who foretold us of theſe things; and the very Heroicall Verſes, and ſtately *Genethliacon*'s of Heatheniſh Poets, who lived both before ſome of them, and otherſome alſo about the time of the Birth of *Chriſt*, who received their Raptures and Enthuſiaſms, not onely from *Sybilla* or *Apollo*, but as ſome think, and are bold to conjecture it, from the Spirit of God.

This was it that made *Virgil* to raiſe up his Muſe to a higher ſtrain, *Eclog.* 4.

Sicelides Muſæ, paulò majora canamus;
Jam redit & Virgo, redeunt Saturnia Regna,
Jam nova Progenies cœlo dimittitur alto:
Aſpice, venturo lætentur ut omnia ſæclo.

For now return the daies of Peace, now the new Progeny is ſent from Heaven; behold, all things ſhall then rejoyce and be glad.

Tully, in *Lib. Divinationis*, gives this Obſervation out of *Sybil*, that ſhe propheſyeth of a King to come, *Quem Regem colere debemus, ſi velimus eſſe ſalvi*; which King we muſt worſhip if we would be ſaved. And this King ſhould aboliſh all falſe Religions whatſoever. Now concerning all theſe, if you ſhould cavill and object againſt them, or any of them, and ſay, What is this to the Scripture? Then will I anſwer you, as our Saviour anſwered the Phariſees, finding fault with his Diſciples, for their crying Hoſanna before him, when he ridd into *Jeruſalem*; I tell you, that if theſe ſhould have held their peace, the very ſtones would cry out and applaud Him. Well then, Have all theſe doted and delired in their writing concerning this thing, namely, the ſolemn Obſervation of this high and feſtival Time, in honour of the World's moſt gracious, and glorious, and bleſſed Redeemer? and are you the onely wiſe man (as it were) that is now left upon the Earth, to cor-

rect

rect them and direct us? have all these erred? Even so will we. And more sweet shall our Errour be unto us with these, (I speak especially of those ancient and reverend Fathers of the Primitive Church, whom I named before,) who, I dare say, were all, and every one of them, as fearful to offend God, in denying the Perfection of the Scriptures, as you for the very life can possibly be; more sweet, I say, shall our errour be unto us, with these, of whom we make no question, but that they are all bound up in the bundle of life, with the Congregation of the first-born, than a new and recent device and purpose, of burying the Anniversary remembrance of this day, in the silent Night, and darksome Grave of everlasting Oblivion, obtruded unto us by you, and such as you, who take upon them to be the grand Reformers of these times, and great Undertakers, and principal Innovators, of all ancient, lawful, and laudable Customes whatsoever. Let others affect Novelty how they please; for my own part, I ever reverenced and admired Antiquity, especially when I have found it in the way of Verity; and If I were worthy

worthy to admoniſh our young, upſtart, malapert, Maſters of theſe times, I would wiſh them to remember what grave St. *Auſtin* ſaith in his 118 *Epiſt.* & *cap.* 5. *Ipſa mutatio conſuetudinis, etiam quâ adjuvat utilitate, perturbat novitate.*

Anſwer to the third Argument.

The words of the third Argument are theſe, *I am fearfull leſt I ſhould make a day to my ſelf*, &c.

Sir, I wonder whether your Lecture-day is not a day made to your ſelf? I doubt not but you have done as much as in you lyeth concerning your Lecture-day, and both extoll and preferr it before the day of *Chriſt*'s Birth; For this day hapning, not long ſince, to be upon your Lecture-day, you did not ſpare to ſpeak it, nor bluſh to give it out in the Pulpit, (as I was credibly informed by ſome that heard you;) That if that day had not hapned on your Lecture-day, you had not then preached; ſo that your day, muſt by all means, be obſerved and kept ſtrictly and præciſely, but our Saviour's day muſt be ſcornfully ſlighted,

ſlighted and neglected, as a day not ſcarce fit to be named, much leſs to be celebrated and regarded with honour. But I ſay, Let his Birth-day be celebrated, yea, all praiſe and Glory be unto him, who was born and died for our Salvation, *Amen.*

Anſwer to the fourth Argument.

The fourth Argument is this, *I am fearfull, leſt by obſerving this day, I ſhould ſet up a day againſt God.*

To this I anſwer, If you obſerve and celebrate this day, you ſet not a day up againſt God, but for God: for that which you do for *Chriſt*, you do for God, for we know that God and *Chriſt* are not divided, but He and the Father are One, they are his own words, *John* 10. 30. *Ego & Pater Unum ſumus: hoc eſt, ſubſtantialiter Idem, & in Perſonis Diſtincti:* In which few words, both the Hereſy of the *Arrians* and *Sabellians* is ſufficiently confuted. For, as learned *Athanaſius* obſerveth, (who for this was happily called the World's Eye, becauſe he did ſee ſo much, and pierce ſo far

far, into this unſearchable and ineffable Myſtery) we muſt neither confound the Perſons with *Sabellius*, nor divide the Subſtance with *Arrius*, for there is one Perſon of the Father, another of the Sonne, another of the Holy Ghoſt, but the God-head of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt, is all One; the Glory equal, the Majeſty co-eternal; ſuch as the Father is, ſuch is the Son, *&c.* And therefore the Glory, Honour, and Worſhip, that is done to the One is done to the other, or is both due, and ought to be done, to the other. How then can it be otherwiſe, that the leaſt Homage, Honour, and Duty, that is done to *Chriſt* on this day, is accepted of God, if it be done in Faith and Obedience? Why then do you ſay, That by keeping this day, you are fearful leſt you ſhould offend God, and ſet up a day againſt Him? It may be you will object, and ſay here, as you do in your thirteenth Argument, that God is in many places much diſhonoured by the great Abuſe and Diſorders that is committed at this time. To this I briefly anſwer by the way, according to that true and well-known Rule, The Abuſe of any good

good thing cannot abrogate or take away the right and lawful uſe of it; and therefore why ſhould you fear, when there is no ſuch juſt cauſe at all to fear? Remember what *Chriſt* ſaieth, *Luk.*9.48. *Whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth Him that ſent me*; and in the ſame place, and upon the very ſame occaſion, when *John* told Him ſaying, *Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out Devils in thy name, and we forbade him, becauſe he followeth not with us*; But Jeſus ſaid, *Forbid him not, for there is no man which ſhall do a Miracle in my Name, that can lightly ſpeak evill of Me; for he that is not againſt us is for us.* And I am verily perſwaded in my Soul and Conſcience, that whoſoever is truly, really, and ſincerely, addicted and devoted to *Chriſt*, neither can, nor will, ſpeak a word amiſs againſt the due Feſtivity and Solemnity of this day; thus (as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks) *Rom.*14.5. One man eſteemeth one day above another, another eſteemeth every day alike; Let every man be perſwaded in his own mind, he that regardeth a day regardeth it to the Lord; and I am perſwaded, if any man regard this day as he ought to do, the Lord will both regard & reward him for ſo doing. *Anſ-*

Answer to the fifth Argument.

The fifth Argument is this; *It is the Devil's policy to imitate God, and when he will be holy, he will be holier then God, &c.*

Sir, This Argument is as strange stuff as ever I have either seen, felt, heard, or understood; for although the antecedent part cannot be much misliked, it being taken *pro concesso, & confesso*, for a thing granted and confessed to be true, that it is the Devils policy to imitate God (for in many things he is God's Ape, as some Divines compare him), seeking to counterfeit and resemble him as an Ape doth a Man, in such gestures and tricks which he useth; and where God will have his Church he will have his Chappel, and he will have his Exorcisms, and Charms and Spells instead of God's-spell, (*i.e.*) the Gospel; but your Sequel or Subsequent, is a meer new-fangled Parodox, and a Proposition, or rather a Suppositon, which is not onely absurd, but ridiculous; not onely erroneous, but also blas-

blaſphemous; and may be ranked and reckoned amongſt thoſe evil-ſurmiſings, and perverſe diſputings which are mentioned by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.*4.5. and are utterly condemned by him: but let us examine what you ſay in the latter part, *viz. That when the Devil will be holy, he will be holier then God*; And is that poſſible? But you inſtance for an example thus; When he ſeeth God will have a Sabbath to be kept, then will he ſet up a Day, and he will have a *Chriſtmas* day to be kept; *ô monſtrum, horrendum*, what a horrible, terrible ſecret is this! Is *Saul* among the Prophets? is Sathan among the Saints of God? Is it poſſible? or, it is probable? or, is it any way likely to be true? That he that was (even like the great *Turk*) an Enemy to Chriſt and all Chriſtendom, ſhould ſo far be a friend and favourer of Chriſt, as to be a prime and forward Erector, Abettor, and Setter up of a Day for the celebrating and ſetting forth of his Praiſe and Honour: Alas! if this be ſo, in what a lamentable and pittiful caſe are we, and how have we and our forefathers been led hoodwinckt (as it were) and blindfolded all this while, and have been taken in

in the ſnare of the Devil, and be Captive by him at his will, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. We have ſure ſerved a very ill Saint all this while, if, like the People of *Callicut*, we have worſhipped the Devil in obſerving that Day which you affirm he hath ſet up; but I ſay it is not ſo, Good Sir, for *toto errat cœlo*, you are fouly and groſly deceived in this point. Shall you, or any man alive make me believe that ever the Devil had any deſire or inclination this way, to propagate or promote the Cauſe of Chriſt, or of his Goſpel; who was ever an Adverſary, *bonis incœptis in germine*, and whoſe continual and daylie practiſe is, *ſuffocare Dei filios, dum parvuli ſunt*, to ſmother and murder the Children of God while they are little ones. Was it not he who ſtirred up *Pharoah* at the firſt, and moved him to command and charge the Midwives to drown the male-children of the Hebrew Women ſo ſoon as they were born, *Exod.* 1. 22? And was it not this Merchant or Factor, or rather that old Serpent, called the Devil and Sathan, who went about the ſame deſigne at Chriſt's birth? did not he inſtigate *Herod* to ſend his Men of Warr, and to kill all the

the young Children of *Bethlehem* from two years Old and under, intending thereby to murder Christ in Infancy and Childhood: wherefore, as devout *Bernard* cryeth out in the like Case, so may we; *ô malitia Herodiana naſcentem perſequi Chriſtum, & naſcentem perſequi religionem*; *O Herodian malice*, to perſecute Christ and his Religion in their minority, to deſtroy the Sprigg, leſt it become a Tree, and break the Egg, leſt it prove a Dove, O diveliſh malice indeed! for (as Expoſitors upon the place aptly obſerve, and apply it thus) *Herod* repreſents the Devil, who ſtands before the Woman in the Wilderneſſe great with Child, ready to devour her Babe; He knew that the ſeed which ſhould break his head, was to be born of the Jews, and therefore cauſed *Pharoah* to murder all the Hebrew Males, *Exod*, 1. *And ſtirred up* Haman *to deſtroy the whole Nation of the Jews*, Eſther 3. *And* Athalia *to kill all the ſons of* David, 2 King. 12. *And ſo ſoon as the noiſe was of Chriſt's Birth*, Herod *was troubled, and all* Jeruſalem *with him*, Math. 2. And he ſent incontinent to cut the throats of all the Children

Apoc. 12. 4

Gen. 3. 15.

in *Bethlehem*; yea, more then this (if if you will believe *Josephus*, who is a credible Author, and a sufficient Reporter of that which was true, being *testis oculatus*, an eye-witness of many things which he wrote of, and saw them acted and done before his eyes) this malicious crafty Fox *Herod* (as he tells us *lib. antiquit.* 10.) put to death almost all the Nobility of *Juda*, and burned the Genealogies of their Kings and Princes, commanding a Pedigree to be drawn out for himself, as descending from the Kings of *Juda*. This was a right Matchiavilian policy, and a deep sleight and stratagem of Sathan, to extirpate and eradicate the name of Christ, and the name of Christians for being a People from under Heaven: How then shall we think, or believe it, that he hath any will or desire to set up a Day for Christ, or to have him worshipped or adored, who set upon Christ in the Wilderness, and tempted Him, by proffering the whole World, and all the Kingdomes and Glory of it to Him, if he would but fall down and worship Him: So that you plainly see, he had rather be worshipped himself, then to have Christ to

be

be worſhiped; All his chief aim is to have the Power and Kingdom of Chriſt to be leſſened and diminiſhed, and his own Kingdome to be enlarged and advanced. But what did our Saviour anſwer? or how did he reſiſt his temptation? Why, ſurely he defied him, and put him from him, with an *Apage Satana*, Avoid Sathan, *or get thee hence Sathan*; *For it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and Him onely ſhalt thou ſerve*, Math. 4. 10. As if he had ſaid, If thou wilt not worſhip and ſerve him in Faith and Love, thou ſhalt be compelled to worſhip him in fear and trembling: and for this end is he reſerved in everlaſting Chains under darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great day, ſaith St. *Jude* in his Epiſtle, at the 8. *ver.* As for Chriſt we know that *all Power is given unto Him, both in Heaven and Earth*, Math. 28. And this was it that the Angel *Gabriel* intimated to the Virgin *Mary*, when he ſaluted her with that firſt happy and ever-joyful news of bringing forth a Son; He ſhall be great (ſaith he) and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt, and the Lord ſhall give unto him the Throne of his Father *David*, and he

ſhall Raign over the Houſe of *Jacob* for ever, and of his Kingdom there ſhall be no end: *Semper regnabit quem mater virgo generabit*, It was the anſwer which *Octavius* the Emperour received from the Oracle, concerning his Succeſſor. And *David* himſelf foretold as much of him; ſaying, Pſal. 145. 13. *Thy Kingdome is an everlaſting Kingdome, and thy Dominion endureth throughout all Ages.*

Anſwer to the ſixth Argument.

The ſixth Argument is this, *If I ſhould celebrate this Day, I am fearful leſt I ſhould be condemned for accuſing God for want of wiſdome*, &c.

To this I anſwer, As our Saviour ſaith, *This is the condemnation* (or this is the cauſe of mens condemnation as *Beza* interprets the place), *that light is come into the World, and men loved darkneſſe rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil. For in Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light ſhined in darkneſs, and the darkneſſe comprehended it not*, John 1. 4, 5. (*i.e.*) The darkneſs that was in the Gentiles

tiles thoughts and cogitations, and the Vail of blindneſſe that was upon the hearts of the *Jews*, when *Moſes* was read unto them, cauſed them that they could neither apprehend nor comprehend this light; And therefore they are both cenſured and condemned by the Apoſtle for want of wiſdome, and for want of a diſcerning Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21, 22, 23, 24. For after that, in the wiſdome of God, the World by wiſdome knew not God; it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſſe of preaching [or by that preaching which the wiſe men of the World counted fooliſhneſſe] to ſave them that believe: for the *Jews* require a ſigne, and the *Greeks* ſeek after wiſdome; but we preach Chriſt Crucified, unto the *Jews* a ſtumbling block, and unto the *Greeks* fooliſhneſſe: but unto them which are called, both *Jews* and *Greeks*; Chriſt the Power of God, and the wiſdom of God: becauſe the fooliſhneſſe of God is wiſer then Men, and the weakneſs of God ſtronger then Men. And therefore I write you not, for being careful and chary of accuſing God for want of wiſdom, as they did: and yet whereas you ſay further, you are fearfull 2 Cor. 4. 15

leſt you ſhould make your ſelf wiſer then God, as though He knew not what ſhould be done as well as you, and ſo derogate from the wiſdome of God, and herein ſo far as I conceive your meaning, you ſeem a little to derogate from the wiſdome of God, thinking your ſelf not bound to keep this Day, becauſe God in his wiſdome hath not directly revealed, or particularly nominated and ſet down in the *Rubrick*, and *Ephemeris*, or in the Regiſter or Calender of his Word, what day his Son Chriſt was born, and there injoyned and commanded it to be obſerved and kept, which, albeit he hath not done it immediately from his own mouth: yet mediately or miniſterially hath he done it by that heavenly Trumpeter of his, the Angel *Gabriel*, who particularly did Preach, promulgate, expreſs and declare it openly in the Fields to thoſe Shepheards of *Bethlehem*; for this thing was not done in ſecret, nor in a corner. Now I proceed to the ſeventh Argument.

Luke 2.

Anſwer

Answer to the seventh Argument.

The words of the seventh Argument are these; *if I should observe this day, I am fearful lest I should be the more inexcusable for my Sins.*

Sir, This quirk or transcendent ambiguity (as I may so call it) is but *petitio principii*, and no better than *idem per idem*, (i. e.) no more then you have said in some of the former: yet, in this case I will not say to you as Christ said to *Peter*, when he adventuring presumptuously to walk upon the Water, was afraid, and his heart deceiving him, or rather his Faith fayling him, he began to sink; immediately whereupon, Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* So, wherefore do you fear, lest, if you should keep this Day, (I mean) the Day of Christ's Nativity, that then you should be the more inexcusable for your sins? What, do you conceit that your carefull and conscionable observing of this time shall add to the weight of your sins? or Mat. 14. 21

increaſe the meaſure and number of your impieties? What a ſtrange and wonderful, anxious and penſive ſurmiſing, and prejudicate or prepoſterous mildeeming is this? Wherefore as our Saviour cheared and comforted his Diſciples againſt the Perſecutions and Tribulations which they feared would befall them after his departure from them, *John* 14.1. So let me, with your leave, a little rectifie, and direct you in this point; *Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe alſo in me:* and I verily believe it, and am ſtrongly perſwaded, that in doing this thing which, you ſay, you are fearful to do, leſt you ſhould be the more inexcuſable for your ſins; you ſhall be ſo far from being accuſed and condemned for it, that it ſhall rather be a means to excuſe you, and a help to hide and cover your ſins at the day of Judgment: and all the harm I wiſh unto you, or my ſelf, or to any of the deareſt and neareſt Friends that *I* have in this World, is, that we had no greater Crime or Offence then this to anſwer for, at the great and terrible Day of our general and common appearance. For then ſhould we be acquitted and diſ-

diſmiſſed with that ſentence of abſolution; I mean with that joyful and comfortable, and ſoul-reviving ſentence of *Venite Benedicti*, Come ye bleſſed: And for your further ſatisfaction herein, and better confirmation of that which I have affirmed and averred: Let me give you a hint and inſtance of it, in that one and remarkable example of *Mary Magdalen*, who though ſhe were a notorious Malefactor, and a great and grievous Sinner, as the Hiſtory Evangelical effigiates, and ſets her forth unto us: yet, hearing that Jeſus ſate down to meat in a Phariſee's houſe, ſhe preſumed and made bold to go into the houſe; and bringing an Alablaſter-Box of Oyntment, ſhe ſtood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears; and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kiſſed his feet, and anointed them with the Ointment. Now when the Phariſee which had bidden him, ſaw it, he ſpake within himſelf being diſcontented; ſaying, *This man, if he were a Prophet, would have known who, and what manner of Woman this is that toucheth him: for ſhe is a Sinner*: And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto Luke 7.

unto him, *Simon*, I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee; and he ſaith, Maſter ſay on: *There was a certain Creditor who had two Debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, He freely forgave them both: tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt?* *Simon* anſwered and ſaid, *I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt*, and he ſaid unto him, *Thou haſt rightly judged*: And he turned unto the Woman, and ſaid unto *Simon, Seeſt thou this Woman? I entred into thy Houſe, Thou gaveſt me no water for my Feet, but ſhe hath waſhed my Feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head; Thou gaveſt me no kiſſe, but this Woman ſince the time I came in, hath not ceaſed to kiſſe my Feet: My Feet with Oyl thou didſt not anoint, but this Woman hath anointed my Feet with Oyntment*: Wherefore, I ſay unto thee, *Her ſins which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little*: Where the Argument is not (as learned *Fulk* obſerveth, and as the whole diſcourſe of the Text makes it manifeſt) from the Cauſe to the Effect, but from the Effect

to

to the Cauſe, Many ſins are forgiven her, therefore ſhe hath loved much; (for our Saviour had caſt ſeven Devils out of her), therefore ſhe had good cauſe to love him much, for to whom little is remitted, he loveth little, wherefore our Saviour preferrs and extolleth her kindneſſe both above, and before the entertainment of the Phariſees Houſe. So that, if we in like manner do ſhew our love to Chriſt freely and chearfully, in celebrating the memoriall of his Birth, as ſhe did in token of his Burial, we ſhall not onely be excuſed but accepted as ſhe was; for as St. *Mark* relates the ſame ſtory more briefly, *Mark* 14. 4. When there were ſome that murmured at it, and had indignation within themſelves; ſaying, *Why was this waſte of the Oyntment made, for it might have been ſold for more then three hundred pence, and have bin given to the poor?* But Jeſus ſaid by way of Apology for her, *Let her alone, Why trouble you her? She hath wrought a good work on me: for you have the poor with you alwayes; and whenſoever ye will, you may do them good, but me you have not alwayes: She hath done what ſhe could, ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my Body to the Burying. Verily*

I say unto you, Wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached thorow out the whole World, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken for a memoriall of her, (i. e.) *for a memoriall of her love, of that good work that she hath bestowed upon me.* Wherefore as St. *Austin* answers some who made a question, How it was possible a Virgin should bring forth a Child, *Fides adsit & nulla quastio remanebit*; So I say to you, *Si amor adsit timor, iste removebit*, if you love Christ in sincerity, as you ought to do, then this fear will soon remove, and expell such timorous Niceties, and frivolous Scrupulosities out of your mind: for what saith the Apostle St. *John*, *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment, or fear hath painfulnesse*, 1 John 4.18. And let this suffice for the answering of the seventh Argument.

Answer to the eighth Argument.

The words of the eighth Argument are these, *It seems to me a vain and needless thing*, &c.

To

To this *Argument* I anſwer firſt in the words of the Roman Oratour, *Quædam videntur & non ſunt*, ſome things ſeem to be that which they are not; for according to the Opinion of the Philoſopher, *Quandoq; ſenſus fallitur circa proprium Objectum*, ſometimes the ſenſe is deceived about its proper Object; as when a Man ſeeth a Buſh a far off he takes it to be a Man, which when he cometh neer it, he finds it to be no ſuch matter: even as the Man in the Goſpel, having received a little glimpſe and glimmering of his ſight, thought he ſaw men walk like Trees, (*i.e.*) he took them to be as bigg as Trees, becauſe the Organ of his Eye, being not ſufficiently cleanſed, he could not otherwiſe diſcern them, *Mark* 8. 24. But it ſeems to you to be a vain and needleſs thing. What? Is it a vain and needleſs thing to ſerve God? It ſeems there were ſome who both thought and ſpake ſo in, *Malachi's* time: but their groſs error and their madneſs was reproved by the Prophet; even as St. *Peter* tells us that *Balaam* was rebuked for his Iniquity: the dumb *Aſſe*, ſpeaking with Man's voice, forbade the madneſs of that falſe Prophet, becauſe he loved the wa- Mal. 3. 13, 14.

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ges of Unrighteousnes, & went beyond his permission, being blinded with the
2 Pet. 2. 16. hope of Bribes and Rewards of Divination; and, Is it (think you) a vain thing & unprofitable to serve the Lord? as *Eliphaz* the Temanite saith, *Job* 4. 7. *Who ever perished being innocent.* So, who ever waited on the Lord and went away unrewarded? He that serveth himself serveth a Fool; He that serveth the Devil serveth his Enemy; He that serveth the World serveth his Servant; The onely true freedom is, to serve the Lord: For *Godliness with Contentment is great Gain* (saith the Apostle) 1 Tim. 6. 6. *yea, it is profitable unto all things* (saith he) *having promise of the life which now is, & of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 4. 8. How then can you justify or affirm it to be a vain & needless thing to spend this time in the publick Worship and Service of God; namely, in the duties of Piety, and exercises of Religion, in hearing of the Word, & in offering up Prayers & Praises to God, celebrating it, & lauding his holy and glorious Name, with Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making me-
Eph. 5. 19, 20. lody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks alwaies, for all things, unto God

and

and the Father, in the Name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. And especially, and above all things, giving thanks for this one thing; I mean, that inestimable benefit and unspeakable gift which God bestowed upon the World at this time. And me-thinks, to this end and purpose we may very well encourage and stirr up our selves with the words of *David*, and say as he doth *Psal.* 69. 31, 32. I will praise the name of God with a Song; and magnify it with thanksgiving, this also shall please the Lord better than a Bullock which hath horns and hoofs; yea this shall be as precious and odoriferous in his Nostrils, and no less pleasing and acceptable in his sight than that right & costly *Spikenard* which was spent to anoint our Saviour's feet withall; although it be said of that, That *the whole House* wherein our Saviour was at that time *was filled and perfumed with the odour of the Oyntment*, Joh. 12. 3.

But the Reasons you alledge, to prove it to be a vain and needless thing to observe this day, are in the next place to be examined and considered; the first whereof is this, as you affirm it, because God hath set apart a Sabbath, the Lord's-day,

day, for this purpose, to meditate upon God's Love in redeeming the World, and this seems to be an indifferent good one; yet you know, or at the least cannot but know, that the Sabbath, or the Seventh day, was at the first ordained, sanctified, and set apart, onely in remembrance of the World's Creation, as it appears in that passage or Conclusion of the fourth Commandment, *Exod.* 20. *For in six daies the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is: Wherefore the Lord blessed the Seventh day, and hallowed it*: For this Commandment is hedged in on every side, lest we should break out from observing it; with a *Caveat* and speciall *Memorandum* before it, *Remember* &c. and with two Reasons after; one drawn from the Equity of the Law, and the other taken from the Law-giver's, or the Law-maker's, own Example: *Six daies shalt thou labour*; As if God should speak thus, If I permit thee six whole daies to follow thine own business, thou mayest well afford me one onely for my own Service; but six daies shalt thou labour and do all thine own work, therefore hallow the Seventh in doing my

work:

work. *Six daies ſhalt thou labour*; whereupon, both Reverend *Calvin*, and that learned Gentleman B. *Babington*, who was once Biſhop of this Dioceſſe, a man of no mean Note, but of good Report both for Life and Learning, do obſerve, That theſe Words (*Six daies ſhalt thou labour* &c.) are a permiſſion, or a remiſſion of God's right, who might challenge all, rather than an abſolute Commandment: For as Judicious *Perkins* hath alſo delivered it in his Golden Chaine, for a ſound, Orthodoxal, and undeniable *Theſis*, The Church upon juſt occaſion may ſeparate ſome week daies alſo to the Service of the Lord, and reſt from Labour, *Joel* 2.15. *Blow the Trumpet in Zion, ſanctify a Faſt; call a ſolemn Aſſembly.* And as daies of publick Faſting for ſome great Judgment, ſo daies of publick Rejoycing for ſome great Benefit, are not unlawfull, but exceeding commendable, yea, neceſſary: And you cannot in Modeſty, and I hope you will not for Shame, deny this to be the Truth; for beſides the ordinary Sabbath, among the Jews, they had their Sabbaths, and their new Moons, and appointed Feaſts; yea, Almighty God himſelf

Catenâ aureâ, cap. 13

himself ordained, in the old Testament, divers and sundry Feasts, to put his People in mind of his great Benefits bestowed upon them: Amongst the rest there were three solemn Festivals every year; namely, the Passover, the Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, as we read in the 16th of *Deuteronomy*; The Passover was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance from *Egypt*'s bondage; Pentecost, in remembrance of the Law, given in Mount *Sinai*; The Feast of Tabernacles, in remembrance of *Israel*'s dwelling in Tents forty years in the Wilderness: Now, as *Hemingius* observes in his *Postil. dom.* 1. *post Epiph.* instead of those three Jewish Feasts, our Christian Church (which may challenge as much Liberty as the Jewish, if not more) hath substituted *Christmas* in honour of *Christ*'s Incarnation; Easter, in honour of *Christ*'s Resurrection; and Whitsuntide, in honour of *Christ*'s confirmation of the Gospel, by sending unto us the Holy Ghost at that time; So that we say, according as *St. Austin* saith in his 108 *Epist. cap.* 1, *Celebrantes Anniversariâ solemnitate Pascha, reliquas q; Christianas diêrum Festivitates*

non

non observamus tempora, sed quæ illis significantur temporibus: (i.e.) In celebrating *Easter*, and other Christian Feasts, we do not so much observe the times, as the things that are represented and signified unto us at those times. If then it be granted, as it cannot be denied, according to your words, that God hath set apart a Sabbath (which is our Christian Sabbath) and is called the Lord's Day, because the Lord rose from death to life on that Day, and that on this day (in that respect) we are to meditate on God's Love in redeeming the World; if we must do this once every week in an ordinary course, how much more may the Church and Spouse of *Christ* appoint, and set apart, one day in the year, after an extraordinary manner, to meditate, and muse, and think on his Love in redeeming her from the hands of all her Enemies; for so indeed the holy Priest *Zacharias* tells us, in his Song called *Benedictus*, That this was the main End of our Redemption, *Luk.* 1. 74. *that we being delivered out of the hands of our Enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the daies of our Life*: Whereupon I infer, That

if we muſt ſerve him all the daies of our life, as he may juſtly challenge and require it at our hands, in regard he hath redeemed us, How much more ought we to meditate on his Love, not onely once a week, but alſo once in every year praiſe his moſt Holy Name after a more ſpeciall and ſingular manner? For at this time eſpecially and particularly, it may be ſaid of Him, as the Pſalmiſt doth *Pſal.* 111. 9. *He ſent Redemption unto his People*; He *hath commanded his Covenant for ever, holy and reverend is His Name.*

But, in your ſecond Reaſon, you ſay That you never heard a good Argument for it: Well, be it ſo as you ſay, yet I dare ſay, that you ſay it, not ſo much out of your Ignorance, as through a miſconſtruction and ſiniſter Interpretation of that which you have both heard and read concerning this thing: Wherefore for anſwering you, firſt, *Hoc tibi innoteſcere velimus*, we do you to wit, or would have you to know and underſtand, That albeit the gray-headed Antiquity and Authority of our dear Mother, the Church of *England*, and the uniform Diſcipline with Us eſtabliſhed, for

for ſome Centuries of years, making and conſtituting it an antient and laudable Order, and generally approved Cuſtome, may be a ſufficient Plea, Argument and VVarrant to perſwade you, or any other rational man to conſent and conforme unto it; for what ſaith grave St. *Auſtin*, He that will have God to be his Father, muſt acknowledge the Church of God for his Mother: and then, let every Member of this Church remember that good and wholeſome advice of *Solomon's*, Prov. 11. 8. *My Son, hear thy Fathers Inſtruction, and forſake not thy Mothers teaching:* For St. *Auſtin* tells us in his Epiſt. 118. *Extrema eſt dementia ſeu inſolentis inſaniæ, ea negligere & repudiare quæ tota obſervat eccleſia.* It is extream folly, and inſolent madneſſe to neglect and refuſe, to obſerve thoſe things which the whole Church (whereof we are born Members) doth obſerve; yet for your better ſatisfaction herein, I have a deſire and purpoſe to bring in a few Arguments, which perhaps may be thought by ſome to be as good, and ſtrong, and forcible for the keeping of this Day, as any you have hitherto urged, or may

hereafter deviſe and produce, againſt it.

The firſt that I ſhall propound and preſent to your quaint and curious and ſupercilious cenſure, or to your Auſtere and Rigid conſideration, ſhall be the Legality and lawfulneſs of Ordering and Ordaining, and ſetting apart of ſome dayes of publick Thankſgiving, and holy rejoycing to the Lord for great Benefits, and publick Bleſſings received; which, if this day of Chriſt his Incarnation and Manifeſtation in the fleſh, might be but ſet up and celebrated amongſt the reſt as it deſerveth, I am perſwaded it would contend and ſtrive ſo for the Superiority and Preheminence above the reſt, that it would even devour and ſwallow the reſt up, as *Aarons* Serpent did the Serpents of thoſe *Egyptian* Magicians and Præſtigiators; or excell them, and caſt them down, as the Ark did *Dagon*; or as the Image of Chriſt when it was placed by the Senators at *Rome* in the Capitol, threw down the Image of *Jupiter*, *Mars*, *Mercury*, and others of their feigned heatheniſh gods, as *Euſebius* and *Nicephorus* report it for truth;

truth; and the Men of this Generation would ſoon condeſcend and yield to this motion, and not deny nor gain-ſay this reaſonable propoſition, if they were not too much like thoſe blind and blinded Phariſees among the Jews, who were for the moſt part, *culicem excolantes, & Camelum deglutientes*, apt and inclined to ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow a Cammel, *Math.* 23, 24. *For if it be lawful to give God thanks for Corporal and Temporal Deliverances, How much more for our Spiritual and Eternal Deliverance by Chriſt, from the thraldome of ſinne and Sathan*; Again, If it ſhall be thought lawful and allowable to praiſe God for the ſpilling of blood, and deſtroying of Mens lives, (which yet neither the Prophet *Eliſha*, nor the Prophet *Oded* would allow of;) how much more then ſhall it be lawfull and commendable to prai'e the Lord for the ſparing and preſerving of Mens lives, and for the ſaving of their Souls, and freeing or delivering both their Bodies and Souls from the everlaſting pains and torments of Death and Hell; *For the Son of Man came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt, and God ſent not his Son into the*

2 Kings 6.

2 Chron. 2. 8.

World, to condemn the World, but that the World through Him might be ſaved, Joh.3.17.

The ſecond Argument which I ſhall here ſet down for the ſolemnity of this Day, I will make bold to borrow from the words of St. *Auſtin*, which, I do not onely conjecture, but preſume, were Preached and Delivered by him on the very Day; we find them recorded in his Serm. 2. & 4. *de tempore*; Behold (ſaith he), all of us are bidden on this Day to a Marriage, for Chriſt came out of the Virgins Womb, as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber; the God-head was joyned unto the Fleſh, and the Fleſh unto the God-head, and theſe two were coupled together; and, after an ineffable manner, in an ineffable Marriage made one. The marriage-Chamber was the Virgins Womb, (which he abhorred not) out of which that Sun of Righteouſneſs, Chriſt Jeſus came in the day of his Birth, as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber; and as a ſtrong man joyfull to run his race. For the Son of God, knowing that according to the eternall decree enacted in the Court of Heaven,

Pſal. 19.5.

our

our Salvation could not be perfected before he was Incarnate; in the fulneſſe of time, came down (ſealing our Redemption) with rejoycing of Spirit, and gladneſſe of heart, exſulting, triumphing, and preparing himſelf to the deſired work of his mediatorſhip. Long had the Church waited and prayed for this coming of Chriſt in the fleſh: *O would God thou wouldeſt burſt the Heavens, and come down*: *O that thou werſt as my Brother, which ſucked the breaſt of my Mother, partaking the ſame humane nature with me.* I would find thee without, here below on Earth, I would kiſſe thee, and familiarly intreat thee without the reproach of the World. Then I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers houſe, though now I am penned up in the Straights of *Judea*, I would bring thee into the Light and Knowledge of the Univerſal Church; whoſe Daughter I am; and therefore he was worthily called *deſideratus omnium gentium*, the deſired of all Nations: but when he came, he came merily; with nimbleneſs of Spirit, zeal of Piety, fervency of Love, as the Church eſpying him, joyfully relates it; It is the voice of

Gal. 4. 4.

Iſa. 64. 1.

Cant. 8. 1.

Hag. 2. 7.

Cant. 2, 8. of my well-beloved, *Behold, he cometh leaping by the Mountains, skipping by the Hills: My well-beloved is like a Roe or Hart.* He came flying on the wings of the Wind, he out-leapt *Gabriel* the Archangel, and came to the Virgin before him, by the Testimony of the Luk. 1. 27. Angel himself: Hail *Mary*, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Behold, *Gabriel* left Christ in Heaven, but finds him in the Womb: How so? *Volavit & prævolavit super pennas ventorum*, he flew, and out-flew him on the wings of the wind; he sent his Messenger, but (like *Ahinoaz*) got before him. Will you see his Jumps? He lept from Heaven into the Womb, from the Womb to the Manger, from the Manger to the Crosse, from the Crosse to the Grave, from the Grave to Heaven again: from whence we look for, and expect his second coming. *David* sang of Psal. 20. this his alacrity: *The King is glad of thy strength (O Lord) and exceeding joyfull of thy Salvation*, *Quia verbum caro factum est, & habitavit in nobis*; because (saith *Augustine* on those words), *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us*, the Day of Christ's Nativity was his

his Day of Festivity, his Birth Day was his Mirth Day, for then his Mother Crowned him with the Crown of his Incarnation; which was the Day of his Espousals, or the Day of the joy and gladness of his heart, as it is so called, *Cant.* 3. 10. This is a great Mystery (saith *Paul*), but I speak concerning Christ and the Church; *&, sine dubio, magnum est pietatis mysterium*; And without controversy great is the Mystery of godliness; How God was manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up in Glory; and He being thus ascended and received up into Glory; for the Heaven must receive Him (in regard of his bodily presence) untill the times of restitution of all things, saith *Peter*, *Act.* 3. 21. And thus, leaving his Spouse the Church as a Widdow, as He hath enjoyned and Commanded her in the Gospel to think upon his Love, and oftentimes to remember him and his Death, especially as often as she receiveth the blessed Sacraments of his Body and Blood: So she for her part thinks it meet not onely to Commemorate his Death,

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Death, but sometimes, also especially once a year to Congratulate and Solace her self in remembrance of his Birth; That happy and joyful Marriage day which was once Solemnized betwixt her and that great King of Glorie's Son, who now sitteth at the right hand of his Father in Heaven: even as I have also observed it to be the fashion and condition of many good and honest Couples whilst they live on Earth together, to keep a solemn remembrance every year of their Wedding day, even untill their Dying day: So should every good Christian and faithful Soul keep a due and perpetual remembrance of her Loving Lord, and gracious Head and Husband, Christ Jesus. As it is reported of that famous *Artemisia*, That to shew her love to her dead Husband *Mausolus*, she took the ashes of his Urne or Pitcher, and mingled them with her Drink, and so intombed his dead Carkasse within her living Body: And it is said of blessed *Ignatius* after his Martyrdome, that these words were found written upon his heart (so it were to be wished that they were also ingraven and imprinted in Ours) *Amor meus crucifixus*, my Love

Love Christ Jesus was crucified for me. But perhaps here you will object, and say, that this is *Symbolica Theologia*, and that it is not *Argumentativa*, (i.e.) that it is an Argument Rhetorical rather than Dialectical. What say you then to *Theologia miraculis confirmata*: which in the third place I shall alleadge; namely, the strange accidents, and wonderful effects that happened at the Birth of Christ, or rather those rare and singular miracles that were acted and done near about the time of his Nativity: For a little before, this was it that made a young Babe while he was yet in the Womb of his Mother to Spring and Sprout, and leap therein for joy; yea, this was it that made an old man that was dumb before, to speak, and to praise the Lord with a song; and say, *Blessed be the Lord*, &c. And this was it that moved another old man, after he had seen the Lord Christ to hold him in his arms, and desire life no longer. He was so much ravished and overjoyed with the sight of his Saviour, that he presently chanted out *Cantionem Cygneam*, that swanne-like song, *Lord, now it is enough*, and I am abundantly satisfied be-

Luk. 1.44.

Luke 1. 6, 8.

because thou hast fulfilled my desire, in performing thy promise to me, that I should not see Death before I had seen thy Son.

To these we may add the apparition of that glorious Starr which shewed it self unto the Wise men of the East, about the time of his Nativity: which was not an ordinary Starr, but extraordinary and miraculously created at this time, for this very end and purpose, not onely to signifie, but to dignifie and set forth the Birth of Christ, for said they, *We have seen his Starr in the East*, that is, the Starr which he hath newly made, to testifie unto the World, that he is born. It differed from other Starrs in Place and Motion, in Lustre and Brightnesse. *Hæc stella quæ solis rotam vincit decore ac lumine*, saith *Prudentius* of this Starr; it hath another way then the way of the Starrs from the East to the South, from *Persia* to *Palestina*, it appeared not when other Stars appeared; It shined in the day, Other in the Night; it did appear & was hid, it was hid and did appear. It shewed it self before they entred *Jerusalem*, and hid it self while they were there: but so

Math. 2.

so soon as they left *Herod* and the City, it did shew it self; and went right forwards in a straight course towards *Bethlehem*, no otherwise then the Cloud and Pillar of fire went before the People of *Israel* at their departure, and going out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*: It kept not the ordinary course of the Starrs, nor any proper way, for it went that way which the wise men would go, and when they would stand still, then that stood still; yea, it did not keep aloft like other Starrs, but it descended to shew the *Messiah*: the *Messiah* so poor, so base and contemptible. Wherenpon it is that St. *Austin* calleth it, *magnifica lingua cali*, the stately tongue of heaven, appointed by God, as it were, to reveal and preach unto the wise men that Christ was that Starr of *Jacob*, propheſied of by *Balaam*, *Numb.* 24. 17. that he was *Stella illa splendida & matutina*, that bright Morning Starr, *Revel.* 22. 16. and that he was *Oriens ab alto*, that day-spring from high, that came to visit us, and to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of Peace, as that holy Priest *Zacharias* telleth us com-

comfortably in his ſong, *Luke* 1.75. Wherefore, as the Roman Orator ſpeaks, ſo will I here ſay, *Nihil horum ora vultuſq; moverunt?* and as the Roman Poet elegantly, *Quid ſatis eſt, ſi Roma parum:* ſo will I be bold here to ſpeak it, *Quid ſatis erit illi, cui non ſufficient iſta?* If theſe things will not ſerve to convince you, I know not what will? For, if neither the VVord, nor Miracles, nor the VVord confirmed by Miracles, will prevail and work upon us to make us believe; then I ſay, as it is in the 16 of *Luke* at the laſt *verſe*, *If they hear not* Moſes *and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the dead*: Yet, willingly would I add here one ſtrange thing more or two, (which are no more ſtrange then true) as a Corollary and Appendix to the former; which though they were not Synchroniſms, or things Contemporaneous with the Birth of Chriſt, yet the People of our Nation, and our own Countrymen can witneſſe them to be true, as I relate them; The firſt is the Thorne at *Glaſtenbury* in *Sommerſetſhire*, which was commonly called *Joſeph's* Thorne: which for many hundred

Mark, 16. 16.

dred years together, even (as it is to be thought) since the first arriving of *Joseph* of *Arimathea* there, which was within five years after the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, (as that ancient Historian of our Nation, the Golden-mouthed *Gildas* reporteth) this Thorne constantly budded and shewed forth its green leaves, fair, fresh and flourishing on this Day every year, to the great admiration of all Spectators that came of purpose to behold it; and this was no other then a Miracle, and may serve for our confirmation in the faith of Him, who, for our sakes was contented to wear (*Coronam Spineam*) a Crown of Thornes: Or it may well be supposed, that it flourished on this Day, to testifie the truth of his Nativity, and to signifie the flourishing Estate of the Gospel by Him,, which shall prosper and flourish, mauger the head and hatred of all Gain-sayers. And although this Thorne be now, as they say, cut down by some spightful and malignant *Zoilus*; yet, tho'e sufficient men of our parts, who, with their eyes have seen it, and beheld it, will still talk of it, and tell it to their Children, not for an

old Wives Fable, but for truth; and one Gentleman among the reſt of good rank and quality in theſe Parts (who is a man well affected and devoted to the power and purity of Religion) for that Thorn's ſake, having ſeen it, doth ſtrictly, and carefully, and conſcionably keep this Day, and is reſolved to obſerve and keep it ſo long as he liveth.

The other rare and ſtrange thing, are the three pitts of *Durham*, commonly called Hell-kettles, which are adjoyning near unto *Darlington*, whoſe Waters are ſomewhat warm; theſe are thought to come of an Earth-quake, which happened in the year of Grace, 1179. whereof the Chronicle of *Tinmouth* maketh mention, whoſe record is this; That on Chriſtmasday at *Oxen-Hall*, in the Territories of *Darlington*, within the County of *Durham*, the ground heaved aloft, like unto a high Tower, and ſo continued all that day, as it were unmoveable, untill the evening, and then fell with ſo horrible a noiſe, that it made the Neighbourhood-dwellers much afraid, and the Earth ſwallowed it up, and made in the ſame place three deep pits, which are there

to

to be ſeen for a Teſtimony unto this Day. Here then we may apply that of the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, *Tremble thou Earth at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the God of* Jacob, *which turned the hard Rock into a ſtanding Water, and the flint ſtone into a ſpringing Well*, Pſal. 114. 7, 8. But whilſt I am telling you a ſtory of a Thorne-Tree, and of deep pits of Water, you bring me into another difficult and thorny queſtion, and plunge me, as it were, in a deep pit of *non plus*, or *nil ultra*; and into ſuch a quickſand and quag-mire of troubleſome meditation, that I ſhall hardly get out of it; the Quæry is this ninth following.

Anſwer to the ninth Argument.

The ninth Argument is this; *It is an impoſſibility to keep it, and God never made an impoſſibility a Duty: and, that no man in the World knoweth certainly what day Chriſt was born on.*

To this I anſwer, although I firſt ingenuouſly confeſſe, according to that Adage, *Davus ſum ego, non Oedipus*:

for it is true which *Chryſoſtome* ſaith, *Præſtat probâ ignoratione detineri quàm falſa opinione mancipari.* It is eaſier to plow in the plain, then in the ground new-ſtocked; better to write on a paper free from writing, than on that which is full of lines; and more eaſie to teach the ſimple, then him that is opinionated of his own knowledge: Better it is for a man, and more commendable to confeſs a little ignorance, then to boaſt of too much knowledge; wherefore, as *Beza* on that place in 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. *For this Cauſe ought the Woman to have power on her head*, becauſe of the Angels gives no other note but this, *Quid hoc ſit, nondum mihi liquet*, wherein he confeſſeth, he did not underſtand, as yet, what the Apoſtle meant by theſe words: So if we ſhould here yield and acknowledge that we do not certainly know what day Chriſt was born on: yet, As a late Starr-gazing Speculator takes upon him in his Almanack, to define the year of Chriſt his coming to Judgment, but dare not precisely ſet down the day and hour of his coming; So perhaps we ſhall here endeavour, *pro Noſſe & Poſſe*,

Vaux.

to

to calculate and discover unto you the year when our Saviour Christ was born, if not the day. And for this I shall referr you to the Rhemists Marginal note on the second of *Luke*, which reports unto us that in the year from the Creation of the World 3199, from *Noah*'s flood 2957, from the Nativity of *Abraham* 2015, from *Moses* and the coming forth of the People of *Israel* out of *Egypt* 1510, from *David* anointed King 1032, from the first *Olympias* 800, from the building of *Rome* 752, *Hebdomada* 63, according to the prophecy of *Daniel* (*c.* 9.) that is in the year 440, or thereabout; in the sixth age of the World, when there was universal Peace in all the World: the eternal God, and son of the eternal Father, meaning to Consecrate and Sanctifie the World with his most blessed coming, being conceived of the Holy Ghost nine Months after his Conception; Jesus Christ the Son of God is born in *Bethlehem* of *Juda*, in the year of *Cæsar Augustus* 42 (*Usuard* in the Martyrol)* *December* 25 according to the common ancient supputation. But it may be, you will object against this, &

* *And then why should not the* 25. *of* Decem. *be as solemnly observed, and kept, as the* 5 *of* Nov.

becauſe it comes from the Rhemiſts, you will miſlike it, and diſdain it; yet nevertheleſs (I ſay) becauſe it is not thwarted nor contradicted by *Calvin*, nor *Beza*, nor *Fulke*, nor any other of our late *Proteſtant* Writers; I ſee no juſt Cauſe or Reaſon why we ſhould reject it, but rather receive it, *Fide hiſtoricâ*, and believe it for truth, as it is faithfully and exactly related by them for a ſufficient Author, and ancient Chronologer, or Reporter of that which was nothing elſe but a true ſtory, and cannot be denyed or diſproved; yet, put the Caſe here that we neither do, nor cannot certainly know the Day whereon Chriſt was born, therefore ſhall it be thought a thing impoſſible to keep it? Then by the ſame Rule and Reaſon, you may as well ſay, It is impoſſible to keep the Sabbath day: For the Commandement doth not ſay, remember to keep holy the ſeventh day, next following the ſixth day of the Creation; or this or that ſeventh day; but indefinitely, remember that thou keep holy a ſeventh day. And to ſpeak properly, as we take a day for the diſtinction of time, called either a day natural conſiſting of twenty

H. Wolphii Chronol. lib. 2 p. 1. p. 92.

twenty four hours; or a day artificial consisting of twelve hours, from Sun-rising to Sun-setting: and withall consider the Sun standing still at noon in *Joshua*'s time the space of a whole day, and the same going back ten degrees (*viz.* five hours, almost half an artificial Day) in *Ezekias* time; the Jews themselves could not keep this Sabbath upon that precise and just distinction of time, called at the first, The seventh day from the Creation; therefore in such difficult and doubtful Cases, the best way is to be ordered and guided, and resolved by the Judgment and Discipline and Direction of the Church wherein we live: for she is our Mother, saith *Calvin*, forasmuch as there is no other entry into life, unless she conceive us in her Womb, unless she bring us forth, unless she feed us with her Breasts, and keep us under her Custody and Governance, untill such time as being unclothed of mortal flesh, we shall be like unto Angels. Again in his *Lib.*4. *Cap.*10. *Sect.* 30. He saith of the Church and Church-Ordinances, that in outward discipline and Ceremonies, the will of God was not to

Josh. 10. 12,13.

2 King. 26. 11.

Lib. Instit. 4.C.1 *Sect.* 4.

prescribe each thing particularly what we ought to follow, because he foresaw this to hang upon the State of times, and did not think one form to be fit for all Ages) herein we must fly to those general Rules which he hath given, that thereby all those things should be tryed, which the necessity of the Church shall require to be commanded for order and comelines. And forasmuch as he hath therefore taught nothing expresly, because these things both are not necessary to Salvation, and according to the manners of every Nation and Age, ought diversly to be applyed to the edifying of the Church; therefore as the profit of the Church shall require, though it might be thought convenient as well to change and abrogate those that be used, as to institute new: yet, I grant it indeed, and must needs confesse it, That we ought not rashly, nor oft, nor for leight and trivial Causes to run to Innovation, but what may hurt or edifie, Charity shall best be judge: which if we will sufferto be the Governes, all shall be safe. And in the next Section at the latter end thereof; It is alwayes meet, saith he, for

for the publike worſhip and ſervice of God, that there be both certain dayes and appointed hours, and a place fit to receive all, if there be regard had of the preſervation of peace. For how great an occaſion of ſcandal, brawling, and contention ſhould the confuſion of theſe things be, if it were lawfull for every man as he liſteth to change thoſe things which belong to common State; foraſmuch as it will never come to paſs that one and the ſame thing ſhall pleaſe all Men, (it being an old and true ſaying, *difficillimum eſt omnibus placere*) if things be left (as it were) at randome, and in the middeſt to the choice of every Man to do what he pleaſeth, to have a Pſalm, and a Doctrine, and a Revelation, and an Interpretation by himſelf, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh with a kind of Indignation and Increpation of them that uſed it, 1 *Cor.* 14.26. If any man therefore do Carp and Cavil againſt us, and herein will be more wiſe then he ought, let him ſee himſelf by what reaſon he can defend his own preciſeneſs to the Lord. As for us, That ſaying of *Paul* ought to ſatisfie us; *If any man ſeem to be Schiſmatical*

Schismatical and contentious, we have no such use, we have no such Custome nor the Churches of God, 1 Cor. 11. 16. Where we may perceive that that good Man and faithful Pastor of *Geneva*, though he liked not the Masse, yet he preached Christ sincerely, and maintained and defended his Church, and laboured by all means to preserve, *Tunicam ejus inconsutilem*, his seamlesse Coat to be without brack or breach, Sect or Schism, Rent or Division at all; but still to continue pure and undefiled without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. I will then conclude and shut up this passage with the witty Sentences of St. *Austin*, *Contra rationem nemo sobrius, contra Scripturas nemo Christianus, contra ecclesiam nemo pacificus senserit.* And if we will be the Children of the Church, as we professe our selves to be, then let us hearken what the wise man saith: Ecclus. 3. 1. *The Children of wisdome are the Church of the Righteous, and their exercise is Obedience and Love.*

Answer

Answer to the tenth Argument.

The words are these, *I observe, God hides things on purpose from us, to see whether we will do any things on our own heads.*

I answer, This Argument is derived *de profundis*, and drawn or fetched *ab absconditis & secretis*. 'Tis true, and we cannot much deny it; For He hideth, or concealeth from us, his Decree of Election, and final Dereliction or Reprobation, because he will have Mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardneth; And this he doth, because he would not have us like curious *Bethshemites* to pry into the Ark of his Secrets, but rather to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling, as the Apostle St. *Paul* speaks; and as the other Apostle teacheth and exhorteth us, to give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure. And how is this to be understood? why, surely thus, if I be not deceived; sure to God, I need not, I cannot, the Foundation of God stands sure enough of it self, and the

Rom. 9. 18

Phil. 2. 12.

2 Pet. 1. 10.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance, *Rom.* 11. 29. (*i. e.*) *Sine mutatione stabiliter fixa sunt*, saith St. *Austin*, they are irrevocable, immutable, and unchangeable; but, Sure to my own Soul, I may, I must, by all means labour and endeavour to make and effect it, or else this Precept is in vain, of *giving all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure.* Secondly, He hideth the hour of every particular man's death, and the day of the generall Judgment, from us, and reserveth them in the private Cabinet of his own Foreknowledgeship; For it is not for us to
Act. 1. 17. know the times and the Seasons which the Father hath reserved in his own Power: And this he doth for this very end, as an ancient Father of the Primitive Church hath told us truly and especially, *Ideò latet ultimus dies, ut observetur omnis dies*, It is to make us careful and watchful, every day and hour, of that last day and hour, *Omnem crede diem*, &c. And doth not our Saviour himself tell us as much, and forwarn us, both in the 24. and 25. *Chapter* of St. *Matthew*'s Gospel, *Watch therefore, for ye neither know the day nor the hour wherein*

in the Son of man cometh; But whereas you ſay that God hides things on purpoſe from us, to ſee whether we will do any thing on our own heads, I perceive your meaning is, that God hath ſo hidden and concealed the day of *Chriſt*'s Birth from us, to try whether we will celebrate and obſerve it, or no, as both you and others of your Fraternity have made the Compariſon, and vented and vaunted it in the Pulpit, touching the body of *Moſes*, how God ſhould bury it Himſelf in ſome ſecret place, and keep it from the Knowledge of the Children of *Iſrael*, leſt they ſhould worſhip and adore it: So you would have the Remembrance of this day to be buried for ever, and quite obliterated and forgotten, leſt we ſhould commit Idolatry to it. Now, touching the body of *Moſes*, we know it was buried by God, as appeareth, *Deut.* 34. 6. that no man ſhould know where his Sepulchre was: Therefore as learned *Fulk* anſwereth the *Rhemiſts* on the Epiſtle of *Jude*, at the 9th. verſe; It is like, the Altercation and Combat that is there mentioned to be betwixt *Michael* the Archangel and the Devil about it, was immediately before

that

that time, when the Devil desired to have the Body of *Moses* discovered, that it might be abused to Idolatry; as it alwaies hath been the practise of Sathan to persecute the Saints while they live, and to make Idols of their Bodies when they are dead. That ancient Father which wrote the Book *De Mirabilibus Sacræ Scripturæ*, which goeth under the name of St. *Augustine lib.* 1. *cap.* 35. writeth thus of the body of *Moses*; For two Causes, as wise men say, No man was privy of his death, nor of his Sepulchre; First, That no man should see that face, which had shined through the familiarity of the Lord's Speech unto him, stricken down or dimmed with the heavinesse of Death. And then Secondly, lest the *People* of *Israel*, if they had known where his Sepulchre was, should have adored it. Wherefore, as most men think, he carried away with him the Rod wherewith he had done Wonders, lest it should have been adored; seeing the Children of *Israel* did afterwards adore the Serpent which he made.

But there cannot be the same reason for the burying of *Christ*'s Birth-day, as was

was for the burying of the Body of *Moſes*; It is but a lame Similitude, neither can the Compariſon be æquivaleut, or any way co-incident or correſpondent; for *Moſes* was but a Servant, *Chriſt* a Son; and the Servant abideth not in the Houſe for ever, but the Son abideth ever, *Joh.*8.35. *Moſes* was a Type and Shadow, *Chriſt* the Body and Subſtance; the Shadow vaniſheth, but the Body and Subſtance remaineth. Beſides this, the one was but a Man, the other God, even God and Man; and ſhall that be counted Idolatry and Superſtition, which is a holy Worſhip, and devout Service performed to the true God? So that *Moſes* muſt yield, ſubſcribe, and give way to *Chriſt*; when he is preſent, the Law muſt depart out of the Conſcience, Iſa.28.20. and leave the Bed which is ſo ſtrait, that it cannot hold two, to *Chriſt* alone: For the Law came by *Moſes*, but *Chriſt* hath put an end to the Law, and ſo Grace and Truth came by *Jeſus Chriſt*, (*i.e.*) Joy, and Liberty, and Freedom, Joh.1,16. and Juſtification, and Redemption; for if the Son once ſhall make us free, we ſhall be free indeed. For there is a great *Antitheſis*, even a great deal of diſtance

distance and difference, betwixt *Moses* and *Christ*, the Law and the Gospel; the one being the ministration of Death & Condemnation, and the other the ministration of Righteousnesse and Life eternal, 2 *Cor.* 3. And therefore I say, to conclude this Point, that this day is not so hidden and obscured from us, but that the very dawning and breaking thereof is discovered and descryed: For, did not the heavenly Herald proclaim it in the fields of *Bethlehem*? and did not the Shepherds find it to be true, that very day, according as the Angel had told them? and shall we think that there were no Registers nor Records of it in that City wherein he was born? and did not that Starr in the East, signifying this Day-Star from on high coming to visit us; did it not directly point the Wise-men to the place of his Birth? Yea, And *Christ* himself told the Jews of this his day, saying, Your Father *Abraham* rejoyced to see my day, and he saw it and rejoyced: *Hic Dies Domini nil aliud significat quàm Adventum Christi in carne*, This day of *Christ* (saith *Beza*, on that place in *John*) signifieth nothing else but his first coming

Joh. 8. 56.

in

in the Flesh, which many Prophets and Kings desired to have seen as well as *Abraham*; for the *Messias* is called *The desire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 8. of whom the Prophets enquired, searching when or what time the Spirit, which was in them, should declare the Sufferings which should come to *Christ*, and the Glory that should follow, 1 *Pet.* 1. 11. When *Balaam* had prophecyed of *Christ*, *There shall come a Star out of* Jacob, *and a Scepter shall rise out of* Israel, *Numb.* 24. 17. he brake forth into this Passion; *Alass! Who shall live when God doth this?* As if he should have said, Happy men are they, who shall see that glorious Star, and Sun of Righteousness, coming out of his Chamber as a Bride-groom; giving light to such as sit in darkness, and in the Shadow of Death: Oh that thou wouldest break the Heavens and come down, said the Prophet, *Isa.* 64. 1. Good old *Simeon* looked long for this day, and with an earnest desire waited for the consolation of *Israel*: So did also *Joseph* of *Arimathæa*, that honourable Counsellor & great Friend and Well-wisher to *Christ*; for he also himself was one of them who

waited for the Kingdom of God, *Luk.* 23. 51. So did that ancient and reverend Father St. *Auguſtine*, of whom it is reported that he wiſhed he might have ſeen three things eſpecially, *Rome* in her Glory, *Paul* in the Pulpit, and *Chriſt* in the Fleſh. If the Queen of *Sheba* reputed the Servants of *Solomon* happy, for that, attending about his Throne, they heard his Wiſdom diſcourſing of Trees, from the Cedar that is in *Lebanon*, even unto the Hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the Wall: How bleſſed and happy then may we think were the Diſciples of *Chriſt*, in hearing a greater than *Solomon*, *Math.* 12. 4. and in ſeeing him who was fairer than the Sons of Men, *Pſal.* 45. 3. and in whom alſo are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, *Coloſ.* 2. 3.

1 King. 10. 8.

1 King. 4. 33.

Anſwer to the eleventh Argument.

In the Eleventh Objection you ſay, *It hath not been the Practiſe of Chriſtian Churches to obſerve the Birth-day of* Chriſt.

To

To this I ſay, you deſerve a ſharp rejection, and a ſerious and ſevere reprehenſion. For it is a meer falſhood, and a groſſe and manifeſt untruth; and I wonder that a man of your account, Countenance and gravity, ſhould ſuffer ſuch an unjuſtifiable thing, to fall either from your tongue or pen; for I ſay, *contrarium hujus argumenti eſt verum, &, credat Judæus Apella, non ego*, believe it who will, for I cannot otherwiſe be perſwaded, but you ſpeak herein that which is contrary to truth: for, beſides that it is well known among the Learned, eſpecially by thoſe who are converſant in the large Volumes, and accurate writings of the Ancient Fathers; It hath been the annuall and conſtant Practice of the Primitive Church to obſerve it; eſpecially in the time, and ſince the time of *Conſtantine* the Great, who gave peace to the Church and commanded this Feſtivall time among divers others to be obſerved. Witneſſe *Auguſt. con. Aimant.* c. 16. 118. *Epiſt.* and in divers of his Sermons *de Tempore*, eſpecially in his ſecond and fourth Sermon *de Tempore*. Witneſſe *Fulgentius de dup. Nat. Chriſti*,

Auguſt. 118. Epiſt. cap. 7.

sti, witneſſe *Ambroſe de Incarnat. Domini*, witneſſe *Bernard* in his firſt Sermon in *Nat. Domini*. for that ingenuous and Religious man, that witty and Godly Father of the Primitive Church, preaching on this day, in that his firſt Sermon, and towards the latter end of it, uttered theſe words, and ſaid, *Brevitas temporis cogit me contrahere & coarctare Sermonem meum*; the ſhortneſs of the time conſtraineth me to ſhorten my Sermon, at this time; *& ne cui veſtrûm ſit mirum, ſi brevis eſſe laboro, Let none* (quoth he) *wonder if my words be ſhort, ſeeing on this day, God the Father hath abbreviated his own Word*: For whereas it was ſo long and ſo large, that it filled Heaven and Earth (*Jer.* 23. 24.) it was on this day ſo ſhort, that it was laid in a Manger: I wiſh here unfainedly, with the ſame devout *Bernard* in his Sermon *in Natalem Domini*, that as the Word was made fleſh, ſo our ſtony Hearts may be made fleſh alſo; that we might alwayes meditate on his Sacred Meſſage, and his Heavenly Goſpell: *Unto you this day is born, in the City of* David, *a Saviour which is Chriſt the Lord*: For all our ſound comfort ſtands in

in happineſſe, and all our happineſſe is in the Fellowſhip and Communion with God, and all our Fellowſhip and Communion with God, is by *Jeſus Chriſt*, for ſo that good Divine St. *John* tells us in his 1 Epiſt. cap. 2. 3. Wherefore alſo, St. *Auſtin* uſeth a moſt excellent acclamation, to this purpoſe, in his ninth Sermon *de Tempore*, which as it is probable, he alſo preached on this day, *ô beatum vagitum Infantuli beati*, oh the bleſſed crying of a bleſſed babe, by which every faithfull ſervant and Son of God, eſcapeth eternal howlings in Hell; *ô ſplendidum & Gloriqſum præſepe*! Oh famous and glorious Manger, in which our Souls Manna lay! ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, the bread of life that came down from Heaven, on which if a man once, &c. *ô quàm dites ſunt panni tui!* Oh how Rich and Honourable are the rags which have made plaiſters for our ſores, even for our ſins! I will ſhut up this paſſage with a Hymn of *Prudentius*.

Mortale corpus ſumpſit immortalitas,
Ut dum caducum portat æternus deus,
Tranſire noſtrum poſſit ad cœleſtia.

And what say you now to these things before said? Can they not yet perswade you to yield, that it was the practise of Christian Churches in Antient times to observe it? Yet put the case, or suppose it was not; you cannot, yea, I hope you will not deny, but it hath been the practise of these our Churches of Great *Brittain*, I mean the Churches of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, for divers Centuries, or hundreds of years to observe it; for they are both Christian, and reformed Churches, and therefore, unlesse you mean by Christian Churches, the old *Brownists* of *Amsterdam*, or the new *Anabaptists*, and *Antipædobaptists* of *England*, and other the like proud and phantastical, and Pharisaicall Sectaries, and Separatists that are amongst us, in these Giddy and unsetled times of ours, who think there is no true Christian Church, but what is of their choosing, planting, and erecting; who, like the *Jews* of old, cry *Templum Domini*, or like the *Papists*, who will have no Church to be a true Church, but their Church at *Rome*; who stand upon their *Pontificalibus*, and are all

all for the justification of their own Opinion, saying as those *Justiciaries* of old did, *Esay* 65. 5. *Stand by thy self, or stand far off me, come not near me, for I am Holier then thou*, &c. And here I could tell you a thing (which perhaps also you are not ignorant of) that the late upstart Seraphicall illuminated *Independents*, (as it is commonly thought) are likely to jostle and thrust the proud, rigid, Fantasticall, and Pharisaicall *Presbyterians* out of their places, even as they have cunningly supplanted, and undermined the Reverend Bishops, and their conformable Clergy out of theirs, *neque enim lex justior ulla est, Quam necis artifices*, &c. Indeed I never heard nor read of any Christian Churches, but have observed this day; and therefore howsoever such factious and Schismaticall Wild-brain'd Zelots of our time, refuse to do it, and both write and speak against it, yet we know that all the Antient Fathers of the Primitive Church, did celebrate it with great Solemnities, as Mr. *Fisher* in his Vindication of our Gospell Festivalls, hath wittily observed in his fifth Section, even *Cyprian*, *Basil*, *Nazianzene*,

Ambroſe, *Epiphanius*, *Jerome*, *Chryſoſtome*, *Fulgentius*, alledging and producing their very words, which they preached on this day, and proving it withall, punctually plainly, and directly, that it was the 25th day of *December* that Chriſt was born on: And further, to confute your palpable Errour, he tells us there, That the Churches of *Helvetia*, *Bohemia*, *Bremen*, *Auſpurg*, the Churches of *Savoy*, *Poland*, *Hungary*, *Scotland*, *France*, and the *Low-Countries*, do allow the Feaſts that belong to Chriſt, his Nativity, Circumciſion, Paſſion, &c. The Churches of *Denmark*, *Sweden*, and all other *Lutheran*-Churches, do ſolemnly obſerve the Feaſt of the Nativity of Chriſt, and on that day uſe proper Hymns of Thankſgiving, made by *Martin Luther* himſelf; the Church of *Geneva* doth celebrate the day of his Nativity: wherefore (as he ſaith here for a Concluſion) ſeeing we are compaſſed about with ſo great a Cloud of Witneſſes, we muſt, according to the truth, affirm, That the Celebration of this Feaſt, is confirmed by the judgment of the Chriſtian Church in all ages. So we conclude againſt you, that your eleventh

Leye Sunday a Sab. pag. 173. Dr. Rayn. Confer. with Hart. c. 8. S. 2.

Perth. Aſſembly refuted. pag. 85.

Aſſertion

Assertion is a meer falshood, and manifest untruth, and no more to be credited or believed, then that vain fancy, and fond surmise of yours, I mean the Fable and story you tell us of in your *Saints Rest*, touching the raining down of *Manna*, on the Leads of the Church at *Bridgnorth* when you preached there: For some Gentlemen of worth in those parts, have credibly reported it to be nothing else then the seeds of Hips and Hawes, being the excrements of Rooks and Jack-dawes, which they there had voyded.

Answer to the Twelfth Argument.

The twelfth Argument is this, *In all doubtfull Cases, a Wise man ought to go on the surest side, and I am sure it is no Sin not to keep it*, &c.

I Answer, in this Allegation you seem to play the part of a Wise man; but in my Opinion you are onely wise in your own conceit; for my part, this I am sure of; First, in respect that *Christmas* day being the day of our Lords Nativity, is the Lords day, and by his spouse Cant. 4. 9.

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the Church is set a part to Gods publick worship, and our Souls edification, therefore it ought clearly to be esteemed above any other of the common Week dayes. And for people on this day, willfully and contemptuously, to follow their ordinary (though at other times lawfull) vocations, or Callings, is in the first place, a breach of the fourth Commandement, for the day of Christs Nativity, is a Sabboth or Rest to the Lord, and God will have us to keep holy the Sabboth or Rest-day. Next, it is a despising, and dishonouring of their Mother the Church, which, whosoever are guilty of, not onely sin against the fifth Commandment, but by our Saviour himself, we are Injoyned to account all such as Revolters from the Christian faith, Heathen men, and Publicans, *Matth.* 18. 17. Lastly, it is a ground and inlet to the violation of all order and decency in Gods Service, which is expressely condemned in Holy Scripture: and if to break Gods Commandements, to contemn his Churches Authority, to become Heathens and Publicans, and to overthrow all order and decency in Gods Services, be sins and Offences

Perk. cases of Consc. l. 1. c. 5. Sect. 5.

1 Cor. 14. 40.

Offences to God; Then must we conclude, that not to keep this day, must needs be a sin; and that to work, or follow our vocations on *Christmas* day, is a great and high offence, or indignity offered unto God, and his Church. And how then are you sure it is no sin not to keep it, but that your erronious Conscience tells you so, and yet is it so nice and tender? on the other side you are not sure, it is no sin to keep it; this is the other part of your *Dilemma*, (for this is called in the Schools *Syllogismus cornutus*, or *Syllogismus Crocodilinus*) Well, *sat verbum Sapienti*; If a word to the Wise may serve the turn, then will I answer you in a word: for although you are perswaded, and sure in your strong Conscience, that it is no sin not to keep it; yet we, on the other side, in our weak Consciences, are perswaded, that it is a sin if we keep it not: And therefore if you remember, the Apostle's rule is, Let not the stronger Christian despise the weaker, especially in such a Case as this, Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth, for God hath received him; Rom. 13. 3, 4.

Who

Who art thou then that judgeſt another man's Servant? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth, yea he ſhall be holden up, for God is able to make him ſtand. One man eſteemeth one day above another, another eſteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully perſwaded in his own mind; he that regardeth a day regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it: He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks: For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dyeth to himſelf, for the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt; and he that in theſe things ſerveth *Chriſt*, is acceptable to God and approved of Men. Let us therefore follow after the the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify another, for meat deſtroy not the work of God; all things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with Offence. It is good, neither to eat Fleſh, nor to drink Wine, nor any thing, whereby thy

Brother

Brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak; You ſee how wary the Apoſtle is, to adviſe us in and for things indifferent, not to be offended one with another, but to uſe all good Chriſtian moderation and diſcretion, & not to abuſe our Chriſtian Liberty, to the Scandal and Offence of our weak Brethren.

Anſwer to the thirteenth Argument.

The thirteenth Argument is, *That this day ought not to be celebrated becauſe there is more Sin committed in theſe 12 dayes than is in all the year following*, viz. *in Drunkenneſs*, &c.

Oh Sir! This Argument and your laſt, are the leaſt and the weakeſt of them all, & therefore I ſhal more eaſily anſwer them, & briefly conclude. To this 13th I ſay as I did before, The Abuſe of a thing, that in it ſelf is lawful and good, cannot juſtly aboliſh or take away the lawful Uſe of it; For the beſt things that ever God created have been abuſed through Man's Corruption; even the whole Crea-

Creature is subject unto Vanity, that is, to Destruction, because of Man's sin, *Rom.* 8. 20. The holy Temple of our God hath been prophaned and defiled, and made a den of Theeves, and a Cage of unclean Birds, and a very Stable for Barbarous Souldiers Horses to Lodge in, in these late uncivil Warrs; the holy Sabbath of our Lord hath been pollured, his Word and Sacraments abused: Yea, because the Scriptures are in some places somewhat hard to be understood, therefore those that are unlearned and unstable, do wrest them and pervert them to their own Destruction, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. And because of this, must the Scriptures be rejected, and not perused? Because the good Creatures of God are abused by some ungodly and wicked Miscreants, therefore must the Creatures be refused, seeing every Creature of God is good, and nothing ought to be refused, especially if it be received with thankfulness: for it is sanctified unto us by the Word of God, and by prayer. The like may be said of the Sanctuary of our God, of the Sabbath and the Sacraments; for unto the pure, all things are pure; but unto them

1 Tim. 4. 4.

them that are defiled and unbelieving; is nothing pure, but even their minds and consciences are defiled, *Titus* 1.15.

But you affirm, and that peremptorily, that there is more sinne committed in these Twelve Days, than in all the year after, in Drunkennes and Gluttony: And how are you sure of this? for it is impossible that you should prove this to be true. Can God be more dishonoured in Twelve Days, than in twelve Moneths? Although a bare Denyall might serve here for a sufficient answer: yet put the case that many men, being at this time apt and addicted, *genio suo indulgere*, to give way to their unbrideled lusts, and disordered affections, in the free use of God's Creatures, should be excessive in their Eating and Drinking, and so exorbitant and extravagant in other vain Recreations, and idle Gamings and Pastimes, that God may hereby be somewhat dishonoured, and this blessed time of his Son's Nativity abused, men a little forgetting the right and proper End wherfore at first it was institutted and ordained: Yet considering the many good, and gracious, and bountifull Deeds, that heretofore have been

been done at this time, the gallant Hospitality, the free and generous Housekeeping, by our worthy, noble, and renowned Gentlemen, and our rich, honest, able, and sufficient Yeomen, by relieving the Poor, helping Widows and Fatherless Children, cloathing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, visiting the Sick, and those that were in Prisons. Take but a Ballance, or a pair of Scales, and lay these many good Alms-Deeds and Works of Piety and Charity in one Scale, and put the Evil Deeds that have been committed in the other Scale, and I dare say the good deeds shall out-
Zac. 5. 7. weigh the bad, though they be as heavy as *massa plumbi*, a Talent of Lead. And this which I have here written, hath more probability and likelyhood of truth in it, than that which you affirm, in saying there is more sin committed in these Twelve Days, than in all the year after. But you had spoken more properly and truly, if you had said, There are more good Deeds done by some good minded and charitably disposed Christians, in these Twelve Days, than in all the year after. Yours is a false assertion, and a gross absur'd

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asseveration: and I verily think, that you vent it to skar and deterr men from keeping any Christmas at all, because some ignorant, dissolute, and deboist Fellows do spend this time idely and vainly in excessive eating and drinking, ryoting and revelling, &c.

But our pious Ancestors, of famous memory, were so addicted and devoted to the Reverence, and religious Observation of this Time, that they spent it in a sober, civil, and careful manner, being thankful to God, and rejoycing in the Lord, for that ineffable and inæstimable Benefit and Blessing which he bestowed upon the World at this time; and therefore they were willing and contented, freely and cheerfully to part with their goods, and impart them to the poor, in plentifull manner: And this they did for his sake alone, who, being rich, for their sakes became poor, that so they, through his Poverty, might be made rich, as the Apostle elegantly expresseth it, and setteth forth the Grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, in a most sweet, and gracious, and glorious manner, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. But where is our Bounty, or our Benificence? Where

is our Charity, Liberality, and Hoſpitality, in theſe cold degenerate and Apoſtate times? That witty Saying may here be verified, How that one handful of old Friendſhip, is better than an an armful of new Courteſy; For all our Love and Charity, in theſe daies, is turned into nothing elſe but meer verball and external Complement, ſo true is that of the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 1. 16. Men in theſe daies profeſs that they know God, but by their works they deny him, and therefore they are abominable and diſobedient, and to every good work, reprobate.

Anſwer to the fourteenth Argument.

The fourteenth is this, *God bleſſeth His own day, the Sabbath, but hath not bleſſed this with ſucceſs.*

In this your *ultimum Refugium*, you think you have paid it home, and hitt the very Nail on the head: But, Good Sir, What could you ſay, If any man ſhould ask you, Why God hath not bleſſed this day? For it hath been proved, that this day is æqual and æquipollent

pollent with the Sabbath; and if he hath bleſſed the one, ſo queſtionleſs he hath bleſſed the other, and ſanctifyed it, and ſet it apart, for a holy Convocation, and thankful Commemoration, of the Birth and Nativity of his onely begotten Son; and that in the 118 *Pſalm*, may fitly and properly be applyed unto it, *This is the day which the Lord hath made*, (i. e.) which the Lord hath magnifyed, and advanced, and ſingled out, and ſelected, for a more peculiar end and purpoſe than other ordinary daies of the year are; And this Interpretation of the Word, that place in the 1 *Sam.* 12. 5, 6. doth well approve of, and allow it: This is then the day which the Lord hath made; yea, this is the day wherein the Lord Himſelf was made, ſaith *Euſebius Emiſſenus*. Therefore we will rejoyce and be glad in it; *Fear not* (ſaid the Angel *Gabriel* to thoſe Shepherds of *Bethlehem*), *for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy*; ſo that here good Tidings do attend it, and great Joy doth accompany it, which ſhall be unto all People: for unto you is born this day, in the City of *David*, a Saviour, which is *Chriſt* the Lord.

And that the Lord hath blessed this day with success, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, and their harmonious and unanimous consents, shall bear me witness. First, That Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah* prophesyes of it, saying, Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; *Datus ex Divinitate, natus ex Virgine*, saith *Eusebius Emissenus* on the words, excellently; In that he is said to be born, it betokens his Manhood; in that he is said to be given, it signifies his Divine Nature: The Hypostatical Union of both doth make one and the same God-Power, or *one Immanuel*, (i.e.) *God with us*: *The Government is upon his shoulder, his Name shall be called Wonderfull, Counseller, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; the Increase of his Government and Peace shall have none End, he shall sit upon the Throne of* David, *and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth even for ever*: The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this, (i.e.) his singular Love and Care for his Elect shall effect it. And doth not God blesse this day then with

success?

ſucceſſe? and doth not the Princely Prophet *David* alſo ſing of this Alacrity, and chant it to the Tune of his Harp and Viol, and ſet forth the happy and proſperous ſucceſſe of this Day, and the flouriſhing Eſtate of the Church, by the Kingdom, and coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh? *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine Enemies thy Foot-ſtool*, in *Mat.* 22. 44. we find that *Chriſt* Himſelf giveth the Interpretation hereof, and ſheweth that this cannot be properly applied unto *David*, but to Himſelf; and this appeareth by the words that follow in that Pſalm, *The Lord ſhall ſend the Rod of thy Power out of Zion. For out of Zion hath God appeared in perfect Beauty*, Pſal. 50. 2. And from thence, this Rod and this Power of his ſhall ſtretch forth it ſelf throughout all the World; and this Power chiefly conſiſteth and ſtandeth in the Preaching of his Word; and by this Rod, and by this Scepter of thy Kingdom, which is a right Scepter, be thou Ruler in the middeſt of thine Enemies; thy People ſhall come willingly at the time of aſſembling thine Army in holy beauty, (*i.e.*) by thy Word, Pſal. 110. 1, 2, 3.

thy People shall be assembled into thy Church; whose Increase shall be so abundant, so plentiful, and so wonderful as the drops of the Dew of the Morning; For it is said, *The Youth of thy Womb shall be as the Morning Dew*, or (as the ordinary Reading of the Psalm is), *In the Day of thy Power shall they offer thee Free-will-Offerings with a Holy Worship; the Dew of thy Birth is of the Womb of the Morning.* Which howsoever some Interpret it of the Birth of Christ, yet *Junius* and *Tremelius* do understand it to be *innumera illa multitudo electorum quæ comparebit in ecclesiâ tanquam stillans ros à cœlo, & sub auroram deplueus*, That innumerable multitude of the Elect, which shall be as visible and apparent, and as abundant in the Church, as the dew which distilleth from Heaven, and lyeth on the face of the Earth in the morning; as we know the Elect else-where in the Scripture are compared to the Starrs of Heaven, and to the sand which is upon the Sea-shore for multitude; the Prophet *Haggai* hath also foretold of these things, speaking of the peace, and plenty, and glory of the Church of God,

Gen. 22. 17

that

that ſhould be by the Kingdome and coming of Chriſt: Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, ſaith he, *Yet a little while, and I will ſhake the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land; and I will move all Nations, and the deſire of all Nations ſhall come, and I will fill this Houſe with Glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts: The deſire of all Nations ſhall come*; (i. e.) *Chriſt*, for in Him are all things that can be deſired, and all Nations ought to look for, and deſire Him; and therefore in this ſenſe He is called *Rex gentium*, the King of Nations, becauſe all Nations ought not onely to ſeek and deſire Him, but alſo to ſerve Him and obey Him: And doth not alſo the Prophet *Zachariah* ſay as much? For he propheſied much about the time as *Haggai* did, and was ſent of the Lord to help him in the labour, and to confirm the ſame Doctrine, even when the time of the 70 years Captivity, propheſied by *Jeremiah*, was expired; and he paralleleth or compareth that time of their deliverance from Captivity, to this happy time of our ſpiritual deliverance from the thraldome and Captivity of Sin and Sathan; ſaying, Zach.

Jer. 10. 7.

9. 9. *Rejoyce greatly O Daughter of* Zion; *ſhout for joy O Daughter of* Jeruſalem; *Behold, Thy King cometh unto thee; He is juſt, and having Salvation; He is meek and lowly, Riding upon an Aſſe, and upon a Colt the foal of an Aſſe. And I will cut off the Chariot from* Ephraim, *and the Horſe from* Jeruſalem, *and the Battle-bow ſhall be cut off; and He ſhall ſpeak peace unto the Heathen, and His Dominion ſhall be from Sea even to Sea, and from the River* (i. e. from the River *Euphrates*) *even to the Ends of the Earth.* Here is ſucceſs enough, if we obſerve it; for His Dominion ſhall be from Sea to Sea, that is, from the Red Sea, to the Sea called *Syriacum*: and by theſe places, which the Jews knew well enough, he meant an infinite ſpace and compaſs over the whole World. As for Thee alſo, (*i. e.* as for Thee Oh Daughter of *Zion* and Daughter *Jeruſalem*) by the blood of my Covenant, (*i. e.*) the blood of Chriſt, Thou ſhalt be ſaved; and by this blood I have looſed, or I have ſent forth the Priſoners out of the pit, (*i. e.*) not the pit of purgatory, or *Limbus patrum*, as the Papiſts would have it underſtood; but

but out of the bottomleſs pit of Hell, wherein there is no water; (*i. e.*) no Comfort, no Cooling, no refreſhing at all, for they that are there, are alwayes ſcorched and tormented in thoſe internal, eternal, and unquenchable flames without any hope of eaſe or end at all, as it may appear by the confeſſion of *Dives*; Turn ye then to the ſtrong hold, ye Priſoners of hope, even to Day do I declare that I will render double unto Thee; that is, double Benefit, and proſperity in reſpect of that which your Fathers enjoyed, from *David's* time to the Captivity, as ſome Interpret the place; or, as others think, by double in that place, may well be underſtood a double deliverance; not onely a Temporal and Corporal, but a Spiritual and Eternal deliverance; not onely a deliverance from 400 years bondage in *Egypt*, Act. 7. 6. or from 70 years Captivity in *Babylon*, but from the everlaſting bondage, Captivity, and Thraldome of Sin and Sathan. Wherefore comfort ye my People, doth your God ſay by the mouth of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Speak ye comfortably to* Iſa. 40. 1. Jeruſalem, *and cry unto Her, that Her warfare is accompliſhed*, (i. e.) That the

the time of Her affliction is ended, and that Her iniquity is pardoned, for She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins; (*i. e.*) as some understand it sufficient correction for all Her sins, insinuating that the Lord will afflict his People no more so long, or so sharply, because his Loving-kindness hath overcome his heavy displeasure; so saith *Jerome* and *Calvin*, the word [double] ought to be taken for enough, or full, as it is used by the same Prophet, or as some interpret it, double grace for double grief; as *Jerusalem* had a double punishment, one in her Soul, another in her Body; so now, she shall have by Christ a double blessing, *viz.* in this World Collation of grace, and in the World to come possession of glory: or a double favour; First, in that her travail is ended; Secondly, For that her sin is pardoned: or double, that is, as *Vatablus* and *Arcularius* expound it, many benefits, a certain number being put for an uncertain, (which is an usuall Hebraism in the old Testament,) for the sufferings of Christ are a sufficient propitiation for all her sins, and for the sins of the whole World: yea, where

Isa. 61. 7.

1 Joh. 2. 2.

sin

ſin abounded, there grace ſuper-abounded, ſaith *Paul*, *Rom.*5.20. For, that place in *Eſay* before alleadged, is, a direct propheſie concerning the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, and the happy ſucceſs of this Day, as both *Muſculus* and *Hyperius* and *Calvin* do expound it; and the coming of Chriſt in the Fleſh (you know) is the conſolation of *Iſrael*, and comfort of *Jeruſalem*, (for ſo it is called, *Luke* 2.25.) and this comfort the God of all comfort will have proclaimed unto *Jeruſalem* by the mouth of all his Prophets and Preachers, which have bin ſince the World began, and ſo we find in holy Writ, that he ſtirred up *Daniel*, *Haggai*, *Malachi*, *Zachariah*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and other: (untill the coming of Chriſt himſelf) who did alwayes exhort his People, to be of good chear, and to be of good comfort in the midſt of all their afflictions and tribulations, and ſtill to hope againſt hope, as our Father *Abraham* did: So *Zacharias*, in his Hymn, openeth his mouth, ſaying, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *for he hath Viſited and Redeemed his People, rayſing up the horn of Salvation unto us, as he ſpeak by the mouth* Rom.4.18

mouth of all his Prophets, which have been ſince the World began; So St. *Peter* in his Sermon, *ad populum*, all the Prophets from *Samuel*, and thenceforth, as many have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe dayes; and to *Cornelius*, that pious and famous Captain of *Caſarea*, *Acts* 10. 43. To him give all the Prophets witneſs, *That through his Name, all that believe in Him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins*: Now with what face can any man ſay, That God hath not bleſſed this Day with ſucceſſe, ſeeing this Day hath produced ſo many good & gracious effects, glorious wonders, and theſe not only in the Earth, but alſo in the Heavens; for if we will believe *Venerable Beda*, it was ſo, *nato Domino, ſtellæ dederunt lumen in Cuſtodiis, & latatæ ſunt; plus namq; ſolito luxêrunt ei cum jocunditate, qui fecit illas, quaſi ſignis ſic conclamantes, Hic eſt dominus noſter & non æſtimabitur alius*: The Starrs at His Birth did ſhine more clearly and chearfully then their cuſtom was; becauſe their Maker was then born, ſeeming to tell us; This is the Lord our God, and we muſt look for none other. Here me-think's, alluding to that excellent ſaying in *Job*, I cannot chuſe but argue and inferr upon it; Did the

the Starrs of the morning praiſe him, the wiſe men of the Eaſt rejoyce, and ſo the ſhepheards, and all the Children of God (*i. e.*) the Angels rejoyce and ſing? Job 38. 7. *And why then ſhall we be dumb and ſilent? and not break forth into the like Exultation, Jubilation, and Rejoycing?* And have we not a warrant ſo to do, Pſal. 33. 1. *Rejoyce in the Lord, Oye Righteous, for it becometh well the juſt to be thankful; Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, and again I ſay Rejoyce,* Phil. 4. 4. *Yea, let the heart of all them rejoyce that ſerve the Lord.* Let us then here a little correct our Selves and recollect our Spirits, as thoſe four leprous men did, who returned from the ſpoyl of the *Syrian*-Camp; and ſay, We do not well, This Day is a Day of good tydings, and ſhould we hold our peace? For mine own part, let the Leproſie of thoſe men cleave unto my skin, if it be not as joyful a thing to me to record, and recount; to commemorate and congratulate the honour and happineſſe, and good ſucceſs of this Day, as ever it was to them to carry the happy news of the flight of *Aram*: Rejoyce then O ye Heavens, and be glad O Earth, for

on

on this Day Heaven and Earth were reconciled, and God was made Man to make peace between God and Man: Rejoyce, O Grandfather *Adam*, for on this Day, that first promise made unto thee concerning Christ, began to be fulfilled, *How that the seed of the Woman should break the Serpents head*, Gen. 3. 15. Rejoyce, father *Abraham*; *for on this Day in thy Seed All the Nations of the Earth are blessed*, Gen. 22. 18. Rejoyce, King *David*; for on this Day God hath of the fruit of thy Body, set a King upon thy Throne, *Psal.* 132. 11. Rejoyce, ye Prophets of the Lord; for all your prophecyes on this Day were fulfilled. Rejoyce ye that are sick, for on this Day the Physitian of the World was borne. *Venit de cœlo magnus Medicus, Qui per totum ubiq; Jacebat ægrotus*, saith St. *Austin*. Rejoyce ye Virgins, for a Virgin on this Day brought forth a Son: Rejoyce ye Children, for on this Day the great God became a little Babe: Let all People, Jews, and Gentiles; Bond and Free; High and Low; Rich and Poor, one with another: Let all rejoyce together, for that He who was in the beginning without any

be-

beginning; for He is that true Melchezedeck, who is ἀχρονος, *having neither beginning of Dayes, nor end of Life*, Heb. 7. 3. And therefore in this ſenſe is Styled an everlaſting Father, becauſe he is the Author of eternity to all Creatures, for that He who was in the beginning, before all beginnings, and in a time when there was no time meaſured or limited out, yet in the fulneſs of time was made of a Woman, and wrapped in Swadling-Clothes; for that He who ὁ λόγος, the Word became *Infans in cunis vagiens*, an Infant not able to ſpeak one ſyllable; for that He, who was God, did vouchſafe to become *Deus nobiſcum*, God with us; yea, and to dwell amongſt us, appearing in the ſhape of a Man; for as the Apoſtle excellently expreſſeth both his humiliation and exaltation, thus ſaying, *Ipſe ſeſe exinanivit* (i.e.) as *Theodore Beza* neatly expoundeth it, *Quaſi ex omni ſeipſum ad nihil redegit*, (i. e.) He that at firſt made all things of nothing, did afterwards make nothing of Himſelf for Man's ſake, He made Himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the like-

Iſa. 9. 6.

Gal. 4. 4.

Luke 2. 7.

Phil. 2. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

likeneſs of a Man; and being found in faſhion of a Man, he humbled Himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs: Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every Name, That at the Name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, of things in Earth, and of things under the Earth: and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father. To which God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, three in one, and one in three; one immortall, invisible, indiviſible, incomprehenſible, and one onely ever wiſe God; be rendred and aſcribed (as of due belongeth) all Honour and Glory, Power, and Praiſe, and Obedience, both now and for evermore Amen.

FINIS.